THE AMERICAN WEST

Jefferson's Arcadian Man — with a pan and pick. The woodcut at right was drawn by Charles Christian Nahl for Hutchings' California Magazine *in 1857. Nahl, one of that journal's chief illustrators, captured in his typically grand manner James Mason Hutchings' own view of the California miner as a paragon of enterprise and virtue, given to changing the course of willful torrents and transmuting hard work into hard-earned wealth.*

Our cover painting — believed to be by the self-same Charles Christian Nahl — strikes a discordant note. It suggests that all the hard work in the world was not always enough to make a day's paydirt, and that the honest, upright, sanguine gold-seeker represented above could sometimes find self-pity in a misty yearning for home and family.

(The cover painting is reproduced here through the courtesy of Mrs. Harry Lehman of Kentfield, California; the woodcut is from the Bancroft Library, University of California.)

THE

AMERICAN WEST

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SCOW SCHOONER ON THE SACRAMENTO RIVER, C. 1900 (SAN FRANCISCO MARITIME MUSEUM).

This wondrous town; THIS INSTANT CITY

BY DAVID LAVENDER

THE NEW EL DORADO.

LEADVILLE, THE GREAT MINING CENTRE OF COLORADO.

TEN thousand two hundred feet above the level of the sea, or nearly two miles high in air, stands Leadville, the Mecca towards which all true believing miners are now engaged in making pious pilgrimage. This wondrous town—wondrous from the fact of its having sprung into existence no one can exactly tell how—is situated 140 miles from Denver, Colorado, and numbers 20,000 inhabitants, with 1,200 houses. Fifteen short months ago it mustered but seven log cabins, and three hundred miners. What a Brobdingnagian mushroom!

The excitement in Denver having risen to white heat, I resolved upon a visit to Leadville. The time to see this seventh wonder of the world at its best is from Saturday afternoon to Monday morning, when the miners swarm in the streets, having come in from the mountains to spend their eighteen or twenty dollars per man at faro, or in the saloons. The most popular route to Leadville is by way of Colorado Springs through Pueblo, by the Atchison and Topeka Railroad. The last forty miles of the road would shiver springs even if constructed of Toledo blades—the ruts are thick as leaves in Vallambrosa, "deep as draw-wells, and wide as church-doors." The road, too, save in certain trysting-places, is merely wide enough for one team, and we were delayed for several hours while little difficulties as to cornerage were being adjusted, and the vexed problem of the inside track solved to the satisfaction of scores of drivers of scores of prairie-schooners.

I have done a good deal of mountain travelling, both in this country and in Europe, and never had so much as a nerve wrung; but during my passage upwards to Leadville there were moments when my heart beat backwards as the vehicle lurched over a yawning precipice of fathomless depth, or crushed against a grim, gray wall of solid rock ascending sheer to the sky-line. Again, too, the mules would become unmanageable, and, taking head, dash onwards, till, turning some acute angle of rock, the carriage would seemingly be whirled into space, while in front and in rear were other teams equally full of the "excelsior" as our own. In addition to this, our way was barred by enormous and cumbrous pieces of machinery being conveyed to El Dorado, the long strings of tugging mules completely blocking the indented road; and should a trace, or strap, or bolt yield, down would inevitably thunder the iron avalanche to our utter and total annihilation.

As we approached the town through the gulch, we could perceive, so clear and rarified is the atmosphere, the mountain sides beyond to be burrowed by the mineral-seeking moles.

When it grew evident during the winter of 1878-79 that Leadville, Colorado, was going to become a phenomenon even among mining camps, several eastern editors dispatched reporters westward to the heavily timbered upper valley of the Arkansas River, 10,152 feet above sea level, to gather impressions. The journalists one and all were awed, and not entirely out of deference to the gee-whiz nature of their assignments.

Among the first to arrive were a reporter and an artist representing *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*. While the artist, named E. Jump, breathlessly touched up the sketches he had made of their fearful road over Mosquito Pass, an anonymous reporter looked out the window of his hotel

FRANK LESLIE'S
ILLUSTRATED
NEWSPAPER

No. 1,228—Vol. XLVIII.] NEW YORK, APRIL 12, 1879. [Price 10 Cents.

COLORADO.—OUR WONDERFUL MINERAL PRODUCTIONS—HAULING MACHINERY IN THE MOUNTAINS, NEAR THE TIMBER LINE, AT LEADVILLE, 10,500 FEET ABOVE THE LEVEL OF THE SEA.—From Sketches by E. Jump.

room, counted eighteen saloons within the space of a single block, and began to write. "This wondrous town—wondrous from the fact of its having sprung into existence no one knows how—numbers 20,000 inhabitants [too many for early 1879] and 1200 houses [too few for the same period]. Fifteen short months ago it mustered but seven log cabins and three hundred miners." Wryly he added that although the previous night had been a Sunday, "I could not sleep one wink for pistol shots—the miners use their revolvers to express joy, sorrow, anger, surprise."

The same tone marked a series written almost simultaneously for *Scribner's Monthly* by twenty-seven-year-old Ernest Ingersoll. Though Ingersoll had been through the area before with the Hayden Survey and knew the mountains better than did the other pen-wielders, he too was agog: "... this magic town that is over-running the plateau, exploring the gulches, and swarming up the flanks of the half-cleared foothills ... rough and ragged ... utter crudeness."

The woman's view was represented in the *Atlantic Monthly* by Helen Hunt Jackson, soon to be famous for her best-selling novel *Ramona*. She saw a Monaco gambling room in a Colorado spruce clearing, a chaotic cluster of canvas tents, wigwams of boughs, half-roofed log-cabins, unpainted board shanties, a jostling population, "restless, eager, fierce."

So in 1879. But notice what happened within three years. An Englishman, Philip Stewart Robinson, visiting Leadville in 1882 in search of the rough life, remarked with disappointment in his *Sinners and Saints: A Tour Across the States and Round Them* (London, 1883) that "Leadville was like some provincial town. The men would not have looked out of place in the street, say, of Reading, while the women in their quiet and somewhat old-fashioned style of dressing reminded me very curiously of rural England. Indeed, I do not think my anticipations have ever been so completely upset as in Leadville."

This reversion to traditional cultural patterns has, of course, marked every lode-mining town of consequence in America. What was strange about Leadville was the delay. The absorptive and standardizing strength of nineteenth-century industrialism was close to the camp from the beginning. Corporate capital was starting into the area, its plans carefully laid, before the highly individualistic, almost mindless, placer miners of the region knew what was afoot. Geology interfered, however. In Leadville's carbonate hills, men seemed to need neither foresight nor reserves of money to succeed, and for two or three deceptive years the upper Arkansas looked as if it really might be the frontier's myth come true—a place where a poor man, if he moved fast enough, could make his own fortune through the strength of his own wits and his own hands. It did not work that way, inevitably, but the short interim proved costly indeed to the old East's normal take-over of the new West.

MINERS AND EMIGRANTS ENJOYING A SAW-DUST SLEEP IN A BILLIARD SALOON AT "TWO-BITS" A NIGHT (*Leslie's*, June 7, 1879).

At the beginning of the rush, the cold headwaters of the Arkansas River seemed more appallingly isolated than was the case. A stream-level approach from the south was blocked at the edge of the plains, a hundred miles away, by the Royal Gorge, a half-mile-deep granitic chasm that could be turned into a roadway or railway only at enormous cost. Westward were the highest peaks of the continental divide, a dozen furrowed, snow-streaked domes of gray rock topped by Mt. Elbert (14,431 feet) and Mt. Massive (14,418 feet). Eastward rose the vast slide-rock swells of the Park Range, topped by blocky Mt. Sherman (14,037 feet). Northward, the continental divide bent around the upper Arkansas in a wrestler's hammerlock; beyond the elbow, dismaying canyons poured their torrents toward the Colorado River.

Some compromises had been reached with this grim geography long before Leadville took shape. In 1859 an

A VIEW OF THE NEW CITY OF LEADVILLE, 10,500 FEET ABOVE THE LEVEL OF THE SEA *(Leslie's,* April 12, 1879).

army of miners had pushed through the canyoned gates of the Front Range—up the gorges of the South Platte River from Denver, up Ute Pass from what would be Colorado Springs—into South Park, those vast treeless meadows whose western reaches lapped against the eastern toes of the Park Range. During 1860 and 1861 a reputed 10,000 persons had swarmed on across the range to exploit discoveries of placer gold in California Gulch, a timbered ravine slicing down the western side of the Park Range to the Arkansas River. Ranches for supplying these stampeders took shape farther down the Arkansas, where the land was more open and the climate milder, and also in South Park. Wagon roads led out of the lower part of South Park at Trout Creek Pass and even farther north at Weston Pass, 11,900 feet high. Even after the rush to California Gulch was over, a few people stayed in the vicinity, and there was always travel back and forth. These things help explain the extraordinary rapidity with which the Leadville stampede developed, once the people of Colorado realized what lay almost under their noses.

The man primarily responsible was William H. Stevens, who in 1873 wandered across the range from South Park to see whether there might be any gold left in California Gulch after a decade of placer washing. Stevens was about fifty years old, stocky and florid of complexion, his red hair streaked with gray. Some reminiscences speak of him as Uncle Billy, a nickname inaccurately suggesting an amiable, whiskery, tobacco-chewing prospector. In fact, William H. Stevens was an experienced mine scout. He had begun his career among the copper mines of the Lake Superior district and had succeeded well enough that men of ample funds had sent him at different times into Colorado and Utah to examine properties that might be profitably developed. When not so employed he prowled around on his own, looking for attractive possibilities that he might bring to the attention of investors.

After testing the rubble of California Gulch, Stevens decided that large-scale hydraulic mining might still produce paying quantities of gold dust. The plan was expensive. He would have to move thousands of tons of earth through his sluice boxes, which meant purchasing several claims. In order to develop adequate water for his giant hose nozzles, he would have to build a twelve-mile ditch to the Arkansas River. Moreover, he would have to repay a large investment and turn a smart profit—from an area that already had been heavily worked. He knew people who trusted his judgment, however. During the winter of 1873-74 he went east and raised $50,000, a capital that might be equated with something like $300,000 in today's currency. This is to say that Uncle Billy Stevens was not engaged, as is sometimes implied, in a picayune backwoods operation.

When Stevens returned to California Gulch early in the spring of 1874, he brought with him a trained metallurgist, Alvinus B. Wood. While their crew began digging the ditch, Stevens and Wood set up a pilot operation. Annoyances immediately appeared. They had to roll black boulders, surprisingly heavy for their size, out of the water channels. Dark sand settled with the gold dust into the riffles of their sluice boxes and made the extraction of the precious metal laborious and inefficient. Although the problem had bothered every placer miner in the gulch, the first to test the stuff were Wood and Stevens. They found that they were being handicapped by a carbonate ore rich in lead and shot through with tantalizing traces of silver.

Meantime they had to make that ditch pay and pay fast. Only occasionally were they able to prospect, following the carbonate float a mile or so up the gulch and then scouring the hillside on the south for a promising outcrop. Eventually they located three claims. Their hydraulic operation, it should be noted, was put in shape during the same period to net approximately $20,000 a season.

When the winter of 1875-76 ended placer operations, the two men shifted their crew to one of their own claims.

They said they were after lead to be used as a flux in a crude smelter that had been built four miles away for treating refractory gold ores from a mine up near Tennessee Pass. Perhaps they were being secretive because they feared they had not yet found the heart of what they may have supposed would be a fissure vein, and they wanted to be free to move wherever necessary. In any event, they kept prospecting and in the summer of 1876 filed on three more claims on Iron Hill, a timbered knob on the north side of California Gulch. Results justified their persistence. The Iron Hill claims proved far richer than the original ones to the south.

By the time spring let them resume hydraulic mining, they had, legend says, 300 tons of ore piled on their mine dump. They sold this to August Meyer, a young man trained in the mining academy at Freiburg, Germany. Meyer represented the St. Louis Smelting and Refining Company, a potent firm that had created a flourishing industrial complex in the lead fields of Missouri and was just beginning to expand into the Rockies. Still according to legend, Meyer had to go as far away as New Mexico to hire enough wagons and ox teams to drag his newly acquired ore a ton or two at a time across South Park to the railroad at Colorado Springs. In St. Louis the ore failed to pay out the costs of transportation.

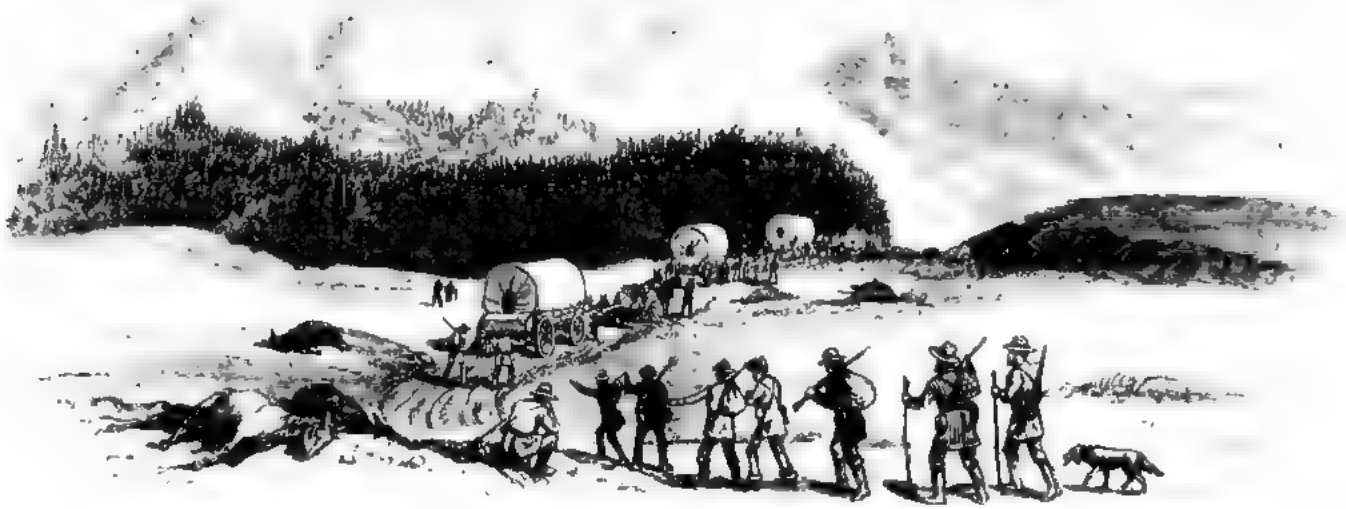
Undaunted, Meyer bought more ore the next year from the Iron Hill claims on the north side of the gulch. After studying the assay reports on this shipment, Edwin Harrison himself (president of the St. Louis Smelting and Refining Company) hurried west to look over the field. He found several prospectors already hard at work emulating Stevens and Wood. (The hydraulic operation, incidentally, was still going strong.) Some of these prospectors were former employees of Stevens and Wood. Others had learned of the new lead mines through a weekly newspaper published in Fairplay, a semi-moribund town in South Park, and in typical miner fashion had climbed over the range to see what there was to see. Among the new arrivals, puffing away in copper-riveted overalls with pick and shovel on a claim called Morning Star, was John L. Routt, current governor of the new (1876) state of Colorado, who had decided to put his summer vacation to profitable use. Most of these newest prospect holes were located below Iron Hill on another timbered knob soon to be named Carbonate Hill.

Harrison decided to build a smelter at the base of Carbonate Hill. Though the new facility would work for whatever mines in the area chose to employ its services, it was not an ordinary custom smelter. Rather, it was intended to be part of an integrated mineral empire anchored to claims opened the previous fall by the three Gallagher brothers, Charles, Patrick, and John. For these still sketchily developed workings, the St. Louis Smelting and Refining Company paid the Gallaghers the then-astounding figure of $250,000.

MINERS, EN ROUTE TO LEADVILLE, CAMPING OUT AT NIGHT (*Leslie's*, May 3, 1879).

To ease his transportation problems—importation of coal, exportation of high-grade ore, matte from his furnaces, and pigs of lead and silver—Harrison also entered into conversations with the Denver & Rio Grande and the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe railroads. Both roads, intense rivals, had recently tapped fruitful coal mines in the vicinity of Canon City at the mouth of the Royal Gorge, and hence were within striking distance of the new camp.

The word to emphasize is "orderly." So far there had been none of the chaotic scrambling for head starts that



PROSPECTORS AND EMIGRANTS CROSSING THE PARKS AMONG THE MOUNTAINS, 10,000 FEET ABOVE THE SEA, EN ROUTE TO LEADVILLE (*Leslie's*, May 24, 1879).

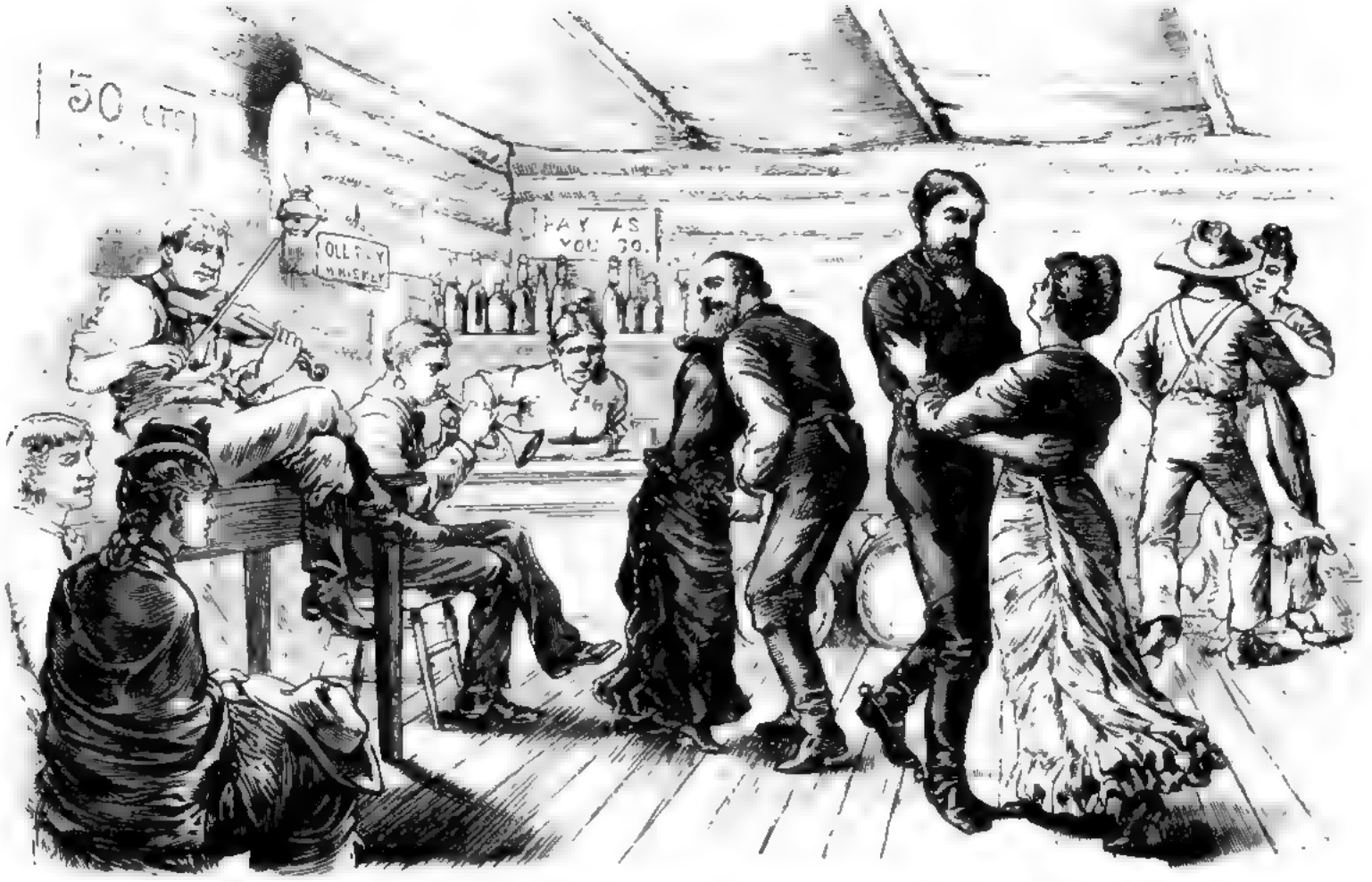
had turned Colorado's earlier stampedes into frenzies. Wood, Stevens, Meyer, Harrison, and their associates, all trained men, had moved ahead carefully on the basis of sound studies, as conservative venture capital before and since their time has always tried to do. But during the winter of 1877-78, events took control and Leadville's development jumped wildly out of hand.

Colorado miners were used to fissure veins, which might be compared loosely to haphazard cuts made into a cake with a jagged knife. Unless betrayed by outcrops, fissure veins were difficult to find. Furthermore, not many mines could be located along a single narrow vein; indeed, the intricate and notoriously abused "apex law" frequently held the number to one. By contrast, ores near Leadville lay in horizontal bands like the frosting in a layer cake, and resulted from chemical reaction between overlying porphyry minerals and underlying limestones—Leadville's famous "zones of contact." Overburden of varying depths and displacements caused by ancient disturbances created considerable unevenness in the bands. Still, practically anyone, however untrained, could start digging almost anywhere on Carbonate Hill or northward on Fryer Hill and strike ore—though whether or not it would prove rich enough to pay was a matter attended by considerable suspense.

The ore was soft. Often it could be worked by candlelight with nothing more than a pick and shovel, and raised to the surface with a horse-powered whim. Because smelters run by practiced metallurgists were on hand from the outset, ore reduction was not beset by the technological mysteries that had paralyzed Colorado's first lode mining. As a result, prospectors were not dependent on outside capital but could finance development out of their own production. They grew independent. Like the Gallagher brothers, they demanded and got unheard-of sums for their scratchings.

In April, 1878, George Fryer wandered from Carbonate Hill north across Stray Horse Gulch to an area where no ore was supposed to exist (later the slope was called Fryer Hill), and within weeks had sold his prospect hole for $50,000. The four locaters of the Little Chief took $100,000 from their mine within a year and then sold to Chicago capitalists for $300,000. An impecunious storekeeper, H. A. W. Tabor, whose wife helped make ends meet by taking in boarders, acquired a third interest in the Little Pittsburgh in return for a sixty-dollar grubstake. It produced perhaps half a million dollars during the next fifteen months, and in September, 1879, Tabor sold his interest for a million six million in today's terms, none of it subject to income tax.

Swarms of hopefuls rushed for the town to share the bonanza—for it was a town by then, having been incorporated in January, 1878, by eighteen of the three hundred people living in the district at the time. In 1880 United States census takers (who missed many



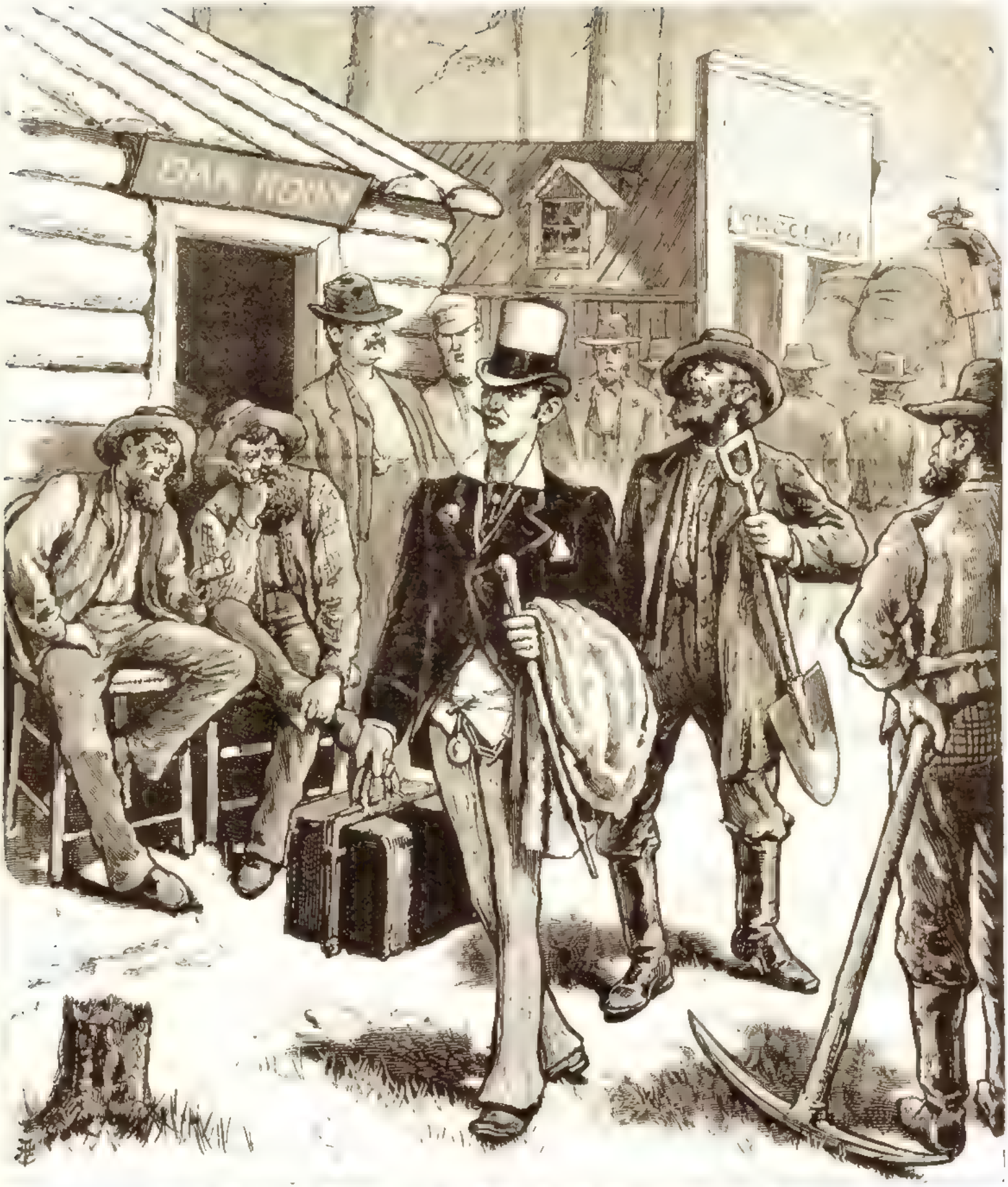
INTERIOR OF A DANCE-HOUSE ON STATE STREET *(Leslie's, May 17, 1879)*

prospectors out in the hills) listed a population of 14,820, seventy-three percent of them males, two-thirds of them younger than thirty.

The prospectors couldn't wait for supplies. The corporate buyers from outside, who had to start repaying their heavy investments as soon as possible, wouldn't. The railroads were of little immediate help. The Denver & Rio Grande and the Santa Fe fell into their famous "war," most of it fought in the courts, for control of the Royal Gorge route up the Arkansas. The Denver & South Park, laboring up the canyons of the South Platte, was not adequately financed at first for swift progress. Freighters and stage drivers took over, knowing full well that their days of profit would end as soon as the railroads got down to business. Thus haste rather than efficiency became the keynote.

The shortest way into Leadville was over Mosquito Pass. During the winter of 1878-79, a fortunately mild winter, a cliff-hung road with 8-percent grades was built over its summit, 13,188 feet in elevation, the loftiest highway in North America. In that rarefied air, freight horses and oxen could drag wagonloads of heavy machinery upward only a few rods at a time before having to stop and gasp for breath. Luck and a blue smoke of curses were among the requirements for inching inbound and outbound teams past each other. One traveler reported that he was "rarely out of sight of dead horses and mules that have broken legs or died of overwork, and every precipice along the way shows the wrecks of wagons that have slipped over the edge into the gorge below."

During the first year adequate shelter was scarce in the town. To fill the insatiable demand, tiers of bunks, each equipped with a thin mattress and an unwashed blanket and renting for a dollar per eight-hour shift, were racked up inside huge tents. Hotels whose cubicles



CONTRASTS OF LIFE IN THE NEW MINING [illegible] OF LEADVILLE.

were walled only with muslin offered some visual but no auditory privacy. Men unable to find or afford such accommodations rented chairs in hotel lobbies or space on the sawdust floors of the saloons.

Undesirable social and economic activities boomed—but so did wholesome ones. The *Daily Chronicle*, surveying the scene in June, 1879, found 120 saloons employing 350 bartenders at $100 a month and 115 gambling houses whose faro dealers were paid up to $7.50 a day (the highest wages in town). There were thirty-five houses of prostitution and nineteen wholesale liquor dealers. There were also fifty-one groceries, seventeen hardware stores, twelve shoeshops, four banks, three newspapers, nine book and stationery shops, and a music store. Churches had to expand as fast as variety theaters did; the Methodists enlarged their building four times in two years.

A one-word generality about prevailing attitudes would be "careless." The future bothered very few stampeders. Twenty or more sawmills chewed without restraint into the nearby forests. To produce fuel for the insatiable smelters and blacksmiths, hundreds of woodcutters filled great pits with twelve-foot logs and slow-burned them into charcoal. Forest fires were inevitable. Three times between May 24 and July 2, 1879, awesome blazes raged up to the edge of the town and destroyed outlying cabins before wind shifts and volunteers with buckets and axes diverted them. In spite of these periodic alarms, neither foresight nor regulations ended the threat; relief came only when no natural vegetation was left unconsumed.

One visiting actress described Leadville as the filthiest city in America. The mines let their tunnels drain down the hills into the streets. Since water was short and dear, many citizens scooped the drainage out of the open ditches for household uses. Garbage chucked into alleyways was seldom collected during the winter. Signs of spring were predictable: the newspapers began to complain of the effluvia—and of the smell from the cemetery. Offal from the butcher shops, manure from the stables, and the carcasses of animals dead from overwork were dragged to the dumps that ringed the city, and were burned once a year. The curtains of flies passed belief, yet amazingly there were no serious epidemics. The greatest single cause of death was pneumonia, generally brought on by combined inebriation and exposure to the inclement high altitude weather.

Robberies were frequent. Newspaper editor Richard Dill declared that no householder dared go home through a dark street without a drawn pistol in hand. Court records do not bear this out, perhaps because the victims seldom complained. The undermanned police force, headed by a notorious bully, investigated capriciously; trials were long-delayed, and witnesses were often jailed to keep them in town. Prisoners, incidentally, were used to repair streets continually maimed by the heavy ore wagons and were housed with each night's collection of roaring drunks in a damp jail described by the *Chronicle* as "reeking with dirt and disease that the most determined scrubbing could never quite remove."

Because no townsite plat ever was filed with the government, title to lots was certified by occupation and the erection of some sort of habitation. Many a claimant, having built his shelter of boughs and boards, grew disgusted with Leadville and vanished without giving another thought to his lot. If values then soared—and they sometimes leaped in choice locations from $50 to over $2,000—a situation developed that was made to order for claim jumpers. They tore down whatever structure was on the lot and erected a shanty of their own in an hour or two. If a rival claimant appeared, the jumpers threatened him away with a show of truculence. Chaotic records generally prevented court action. Relief, if any, came on rare occasions when neighbors rallied and demolished an offending structure with a battering ram. Lot jumpers grew so brazen in time that on November 20, 1879, a vigilante committee disguised in black masks and long black gowns hanged from the roof joists of an unfinished building a notorious claim violator named Frodsham and a twenty-year-old youth under suspicion of robbery. After that, according to editor Dill, there was no more crime in Leadville than in any normal town—a somewhat vague statistic.

The city's social pangs were ill-attended by a mediocre town council whose members, sundered by sharp personal animosities, had no background in government. Their treasury was in a state of chronic crisis. Assessments on real property never came close to catching up with actuality. Although prostitution and gambling were both outlawed by Colorado statute, Leadville survived only with their connivance; "culprits" lined up in the city hall on the first of each month to pay fines (in effect licenses) that granted immunity for the next thirty days. Without this dubious revenue the city could hardly have functioned.

Continued on page 68

HOOF & HORN ON THE Chisholm Trail

BY JOE B. FRANTZ

"I wouldn't take anything for what I have saw but I wouldn't care to travel the same road again"

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO, Texas had just come through a portion of that national death-wish known as the Civil War, not so physically devastated as its confederates to the east but still neglected and bankrupt, a collection of returning losers at loose ends. Kansas had been bled almost beyond endurance, although it seemed to have some hope simply because it lay in the way of railroad men who were trying to get across its mildly wrinkled face to the more alluring enticements nearer the Pacific Ocean. Between those two states the world belonged to the Indians, a land set aside for them only because most white men thought it held no future.

The story of what happened to confound the Jeremiahs who felt that this wide Southwest was either doomed or not worth thinking about except as a desert fact of life, an impediment to be gotten over or around, is too familiar to every schoolboy from Miami to Merced to repeat in detail here. The combination of circumstances that Texas had a plethora of wild animals that resembled cattle, that the North was rich and hungry, that railroads were snaking across Kansas, and that grass covered almost the entire surface between South Texas, where the cattle were, and Kansas, where transportation was, has provided the subject for almost as many scripts and manuscripts as there were longhorns. It's an isolated lad indeed who does not know that while a longhorn steer in Texas was worth only six dollars or so, it could bring three or four times that much if it could just be brought to Kansas City.

Trailing, of course, had been tried from the time that Texas first realized its bovine resource, but the routes were difficult and the lanky Spanish steers were unwelcome in settled areas. But then Joseph G. McCoy, an Illinois dealer on the shy side of thirty, convinced the Kansas Pacific that it should make a cowtown out of that dismal dozen of log huts that took its name from the Biblical phrase, "a tetrarch named Abilene." By late summer of 1867, Abilene was yet not a complete cowtown, but it had enough facilities in the way of pens, pads, and pleasure that McCoy could send the word

southward for Texas cattlemen to bring their creatures in. Abilene was west of settlement, the grass was good, and—as it turned out—the steers would arrive fatter than when they left the home range south of San Antonio. By early August, 7,000 cattle had been lured into Abilene, and before the end of the season 25,000 would arrive. Not many for a country that boasted up to 4,500,000 head (depending on whose census figures you believed), but still a start. One hundred years ago this coming September 5, the first shipment of twenty carloads clattered out of Abilene for Kansas City and Chicago, and a new era in American economy, American dietary habits, and American folklore was underway.

They were a peculiar breed, these Moorish-Spanish steers mixed a bit with British blood. They were in some ways all hoof and horn, although these noticeable features should not obscure the fact that they carried beef on their big bones. In the words of Charles Goodnight, "As trail cattle, their equal never has been known. Their hoofs are superior to those of any other cattle. They can go farther without water and endure more suffering than others." The horns were the first things that struck anyone looking at these critters. Some horns were as thick and short-curved and unpoetic as buffalo horns, while others spread ninety inches or better from gracefully curved tip to tip. They had no consistent color, as a well-brought-up Angus or Hereford should, but were likely to be blue, red, white, but most of all stippled and dappled. They were ugly beasts, and still are—those few that remain—unless you happen to own them. Then they become objects of economic concern and of an affection that still borders on sentimentality. A former president of New York's State Agricultural Society might write of them in the late 1860's that they were a "strange race of animals," but you had to admit that their meat was tasty and that most of all, it was there.

So 25,000 of them turned north and west in that summer of 1867 to wind up in Abilene. So successful was the pioneer venture that the annual trailings increased until the distance from Texas' Nueces River to that first great cowtown in Kansas seemed almost one continuous file of hoofs and horns, somewhat like those circus acts where the elephants parade tail-to-trunk. In the fifth year of the Chisholm Trail, 700,000 walked in. No other year would match 1871's trailings, for the owners learned that year that even success can be overdone.

Though most of the original drovers are either dead or 99 years old, their descendants have deluded themselves into thinking that they too were on the trail, so that the second, third, and fourth generations can get as intense arguing about the ramifications of the drive as any 1967 Daughter of the Confederacy fighting her war in an Atlanta swim-and-trim or at an Opelika chapter cocktail. But the old cowhand—1867 real thing or 1967 bandannaed variety, drinking his daiquiri in a plush Cattleman's Club—believes that the Chisholm Trail began where he or his granddaddy started north. He is, of course, dead right.

The Chisholm Trail was not a single line, like an interstate highway, except through Indian Territory, where it pretty well followed the line of today's Highway 81. The Chisholm Trail, as T. C. Richardson of Dallas has forever branded it, "originated wherever a herd was shaped up and ended wherever a market was found." The Trail was almost a state of mind, or at the most a direction pointing to the North Star. It started in Brownsville, it started at Laredo, it started at Houston, it started at Jacksboro; it started on the Rio Grande, the Nueces, the Medina, the Frio, the Lampasas, the Leon, no river at all, or an unlikely Buffalo Bayou, with its intimations of things French and Louisianan. As far as Texas was concerned, only this fact was certain: it fit into a general road running north from San Antonio through Austin, Waco, and Fort Worth; and it crossed at Red River Station, opposite the red bluffs of Oklahoma.

It was, as is well known, a bit of a misnomer. Many Texans spoke of it simply as the Trail, or as the Kansas Trail. It probably should have been called McCoy's Trail. Kansans called it the Texas Cattle Trail or, with a touch of parochialism, the Wichita Trail.

But Jesse Chisholm, half Scotch and half Cherokee, trading and guiding from his post on the North Canadian in Oklahoma Territory to another one at a point on the Arkansas River that one day would be called Wichita, took his wagons up and down this route. Naturally, he left ruts. Those first drovers who pointed for Abilene in August and September, 1867, followed his ruts.

By the next spring, Jesse Chisholm was dead, but his name goes on in song and scenario. The whole extension of the Chisholm name northward from Wichita and southward into Texas, although Jesse himself only used part of it and saw only the beginnings of its use for cattle, recalls that bromidic anecdote about the family that traveled from Boston to San Francisco on the Dedham

road. Thus do men attain earthly immortality, and thus shall the name of Jesse Chisholm remain alive so long as men recall or revere those wild free days when, in the words of J. Frank Dobie, "waters ran clear . . . free grass waved a carpet over the face of the earth, and America's man on horseback . . . rode over the rim with all the abandon, energy, insolence, pride, carelessness, and confidence epitomizing the becoming West."

No one ever went up the trail who didn't remain forever grateful for the experience. They might not agree with Gene Elliston, an old XIT hand who reckoned as how trailing "is the easiest part of cow punching." Or they might not rhapsodize with Will Rogers, who called the trail country "the prettiest . . . I ever saw in my life, as flat as a beauty-contest winner's stomach and prairie lakes scattered all over it . . . . There wasn't a house or chicken in the whole country . . . . And mirages! You could see anything in the world—just ahead of you." And if they stayed at it long enough, they undoubtedly would agree with Major George W. Littlefield, who for more than a dozen years took or sent annually a few thousand up to thirty thousand head of cattle in search of Kansas profits. Littlefield was quoted as saying in 1884, "I am tired of the trail . . . . I shall be but happy to take to the *rail* in the future."

But then, as J. Evetts Haley says of the Major, "the cattle trail was not color and glamor to him, but big business." A businessman could tire of the trail, but Haley writes of Littlefield's hands, "they rode not for money alone, but for an unsung glory and their horses and their work; they struggled not for security but rode high on a free and happy life; they fought not simply for stock, but because of a lusty love of battle." And they were all ready to testify for the life. For instance, listen to W. A. Askew:

"I had smelled the sweat; I had tasted the salty grime and the silt and dust of the trailing herd; I had fought my way to the top of my mount and was all over him as he zigzagged, fence-rowed, and changed directions.

"I saw the pointers taking their places, in front, the swing men coming up to take their places, and the flankers and drag men coming after. I had seen the old bowlegged dust-begrimed riders of the Old West, remnants of both sides in the Civil War . . . with their ten-gallon hats, their flannel shirts, boots and spurs, and six-guns. Their coil of rope, ragged caps, and worn-out slickers . . . .

"I have ridden the cayuse, which had a belligerent disposition; I have helped the boys in a kangaroo court, and seen a tenderfoot tried and ready to be hanged, and a friendly cowboy come to his help with a flourishing gun and the boys scatter.

"I was a cowhand looking for adventure, and I found it."

All of them could agree to some degree with Jim McCauley when he wrote, "I wouldn't take anything for what I have saw but I wouldn't care to travel the same road again. . . . Ide rather be on a cow ranch and work just wages . . . than anything you could name . . . the wild free life whare you have to feel if your closest friend is still on your hip . . . that is real living, that is sport, but 'tis the violant kind and lots of people love it beyond a doubt." But then McCauley goes on and spoils it all by saying, "I wish I had never saw a cow ranch."

Well, these were men looking back from a long

"I had seen the old bowlegged dust-begrimed riders of the Old West . . . with their ten-gallon hats, their flannel shirts, boots and spurs, and six-guns. Their coil of rope, ragged caps, and worn-out slickers."

vantage point. How about a couple of them who wrote it down while they were still at it, or while the event was recent? For instance, take Ben C. Mayes, a cowboy for twenty-four years in Tom Green County, Texas. When Ben came off the range, he tried being a postmaster at Water Valley, Texas, while running a grocery and carpentering on the side. In fact, he tried a little bit of everything. But always he came back to his old diary—to those days when he worked on Texas' Colorado River for $20 a month or, for that matter, when he worked for S. T. Martin at $10 a month. He left Morton's ranch skinny as a rail, but his "Poney was fat . . . and pretty Rolicky" until it was "Bout all I could do to Ride her." Mayes followed a frequent cowboy routine, drifting from ranch to ranch, coming to the conclusion that "if the Country was as Big everyway she was Big one Sure enough."

Came the day for the drive and Mayes, who had been working on another part of the spread, arrived just as day began to break.

"They all got down and fixed there Saddles and mounted and Boss Says here is hell and we all Scater out and Started the drive all Hollowing and cattle Runing in ever direction I tryed to Keep Sight of Some of the Boys But they got out of my Sight and I dident no more know where I was than nothing only I was on the Steak Plains and in Texas I guessed . . . and it was hell for me for I never found camp for three days . . . I would Ride all day and Sleep with the cattle and cayoats howling all Round me ever night . . . I just felt ever night it was my last night . . . ever night I would say my Prairs as I was Sure they would eat me up that night . . . I guess I never would hav found camp But I Saw fellow Runing Some Mustang and I taken two him and of course my horse was Bout Played out . . . I had lost Sight of the man and I got down and layed down on the grass and thought that Just as well giv up as was So tiard and Bout Starved to death

"But while I was Studing what fix I was in I heard horse coming my way and I looked up and there was one of our own Boys and I Just caught him Round the neck and hollowed for Joy and he Says we hav Been hunting you ever Since we Started the drive he Says how come you to get lost off from the drive and I told him I couldent tell . . . I had Rode so long I dident Know whetcher I was in Texas . . . he Says you dident go no where . . . But it Seemed like I had Rode enough if it was on Streight line to Put me in Chicago."

Not all the fun was confined to the end of the trail—after all, most of the cowboys were barely out of their boyhood. The cows and the country might mature men quickly, but the bits of boy would show through in practical jokes along the way. The wonder is that so many of the pranks turned out to be innocent and that so few cowboys were either maimed or killed by their high jinks. Ben Mayes, for example, tells how his group, coming in off a cow hunt, camped one night outside Fort Chadbourne, where all got drunk on hard cider. The general store that supplied them was only about two hundred yards away, an easy distance to lug a water bucket with the instructions, "little more cider Mr Tilley."

"They Kept that up untill it dident taste good and they all had all they needed any way the cook was feeling Pretty good and he clum tree and Says Just watch me act Squirrel I am going to Jump from one limb to limb and one of the Boys got his gun and Says come down from there or I will Shoot you down and he Shot time or two up through the tree and you orto Saw the cook come down he Just turned loos and fell out and the fellow Says By Jinks I dident aim to shoot him . . . .

"The prettiest country I ever saw in my life . . .
You could see anything in the world—
just ahead of you."

"And the Cook Jumped up and Says you dident .. But you orto Set up the cider for Scaring me like you did and the fellow Says Shore get the Bucket and get more cider and the Boys had to cook Supper as the cook was two full of cidar to tell Skillet from Wash Boiler . . . .

"And to tell the truth we all had all we wanted and all the Roads wer two crooked to travel."

Trail life, unlike Sporting Life's woman, was not a sometime thing, a summer interlude that filled in a vacant spot in the calendar. It is logical enough to believe that there was a flurry of activity as trail time approached, that the steers and the men took off, and that one monotonous day followed another. To stay with the simile, that ain't necessarily so. As Hamp Baker wrote in his diary, for the week of February 3-7, Monday through Friday, the weather was "mostly pleasant. About the middle of the week, the people generally commenced branding yearlings, or rather calves. There seems to be a perfect panic among the citizens, each one fearing he will not brand as many as some one else. Almost every boy in school that is large enough had stopped school and is after yearlings." This was in Palo Pinto County, about sixty miles west of Fort Worth, in 1868. During the late summer of the following year, Baker—who filled in as a school teacher, justice of the peace, postmaster, and coroner—started getting ready for his first trail drive northward. His first entry concerning preparations for a specific drive starts the week of Monday, August 9, just a few days after the Indians had chased the presiding elder and the circuit rider into cedar brakes. The notation is terse: "Spent the time hunting beef cattle and preparing to drive my cattle in company with Bro Slaughter to Kansas." Twelve days later, he was writing that he was still trying to get his affairs in order at home and that "our herds are almost ready to start." August in Texas, of course, is fit only for the devil and Texans, so that Baker found he had "a hot teadious task, and very wearisome."

Still he herded, still he tallied, still he branded. One afternoon he spent in copying the tally for recording purposes. On September 2, twenty-five days after he got ready to go, Baker left for Kansas with a herd of 1,250 head, of which 480 belonged to him. J. R. Jowell and P. E. Slaughter accompanied him as fellow owners. Parson Slaughter was herd boss. Up the trail they went, ten miles one day, ten miles the next day, a stampede on the fifth day, when the weather turned so blessedly damp and cold that it cost several hours trying to turn the herd. Most herd bosses tended to drive their steers fairly hard and steadily the first few days out, both because they were fresh and because hard driving should discipline the half-wild creatures. Further up the trail, the drovers would slow the pace and work along at about an eight- to ten-mile stretch each day. Parson Slaughter, though, started slow and stayed that way.

On the tenth day, the herd came to Red River Station, and about ten o'clock in the morning started across. One

"I had smelled the sweat; I had tasted the salty grime and the silt and the dust of the trailing herd. . . ."

of the hands, William Cowden, "came very near drowning, and it was with difficulty that he was rescued. We crossed the wagons on a ferry . . . . We made the crossing without losing any of the herd." Baker meanwhile had picked up an eye infection and was living on bread, onions, and "2 pills for supper." From there through Indian Territory, the comments on the excellent grass recur with almost each entry. Fifteen or so miles north of the Red, the herd came to Muddy Creek, which turned out to be more difficult than the Red, costing

a whole day and five head to get across and up its slippery, boggy banks. Near the Canadian, the drovers learned that three other herds of about 900 each were just about to catch them.

Despite the tonic effect of limitless skies and seas of grass, keeping a crew happy with little sleep, uninspired grub, and constant, close association was as difficult as maintaining good morale on a losing ball club. Thus it is no surprise—even with a Parson at the helm—that by September 22, in the midst of Seminole settlements, Baker should confide to his diary that there was "considerable dissatisfaction among the hands on account of the Boss's ill temper."

But on they went, past Negro settlements, past tiny Fort Arbuckle with its two companies of troops, past Cherokee towns, past Seminole, past Osage, all accomplished without any confrontations whatsoever with Indian tribes. Not even a beef was demanded. They left behind the muddy creeks and rivers, and they moved across gravelly bottoms where a man could see what was beneath his feet. Thirty-eight days out, the herd grazed near the Kansas line, along with 20,000 other head "waiting for buyers." A cold, wet norther was sweeping the place, and every morning found frost on the ground. Cowden had a week of racking chills, but the market and the herd could not wait for him to quit shaking. As they moved northward through Kansas, camping along sunflower-lined streams with familiar names like Chisholm Creek and the Little Arkansas, buyers picked off parts of the herd. One day the group sold 85 head of two-year-olds at $12.00 each and 40 three-year-olds at $17.00 each—not sensational prices, but still profitable. About twenty-five miles north of Fort Wichita, with the sleet blowing cold, gloomy, and continuously for several hours, the day was brightened by the unexpected arrival of C. C. Slaughter, the great Texas cattleman, on his way back from Abilene. The market, Slaughter said, was favorable. So into the teeth of the gale the herd continued.

Finally, fifty-three days out of Palo Pinto County, Baker, Parson, Slaughter, and their cohorts camped two and a half miles outside Abilene. They had started late from Texas, as indicated by something more than the heavy snowfall that blew about them. Herds had stacked up, "many of them in poor condition, and quite shabby." The presence of so many end-of-season cattle, along with the cold weather, was making prices drop steadily, giving the advantage to the buyer. Two days after arrival, the Palo Pinto men sold 304 head of choice cattle and drove them into town in a frigid wind for a 1:00 A.M. shipment, only to find the railroad men in such confusion that the cattle had to be turned around and driven back to camp and herded through the night. Two days later, they drove the herd back into town, and this time shipped them.

Meanwhile, the cold west wind had whipped up a prairie fire that was burning, it seemed, on all sides. And on the night of October 27-28, Baker lost 28 head to the fire. He paid off his hands and discharged them, counted up his currency, and found that he had made $4,068.00. Four days later, he was still out on the range looking for lost cattle, trying to get the last bit of income off the herd he had nursed north. The four days proved profitable, as he "found 7 head of cattle in McCoy's herd, cut them out and drove them to Abilene, about twenty-five miles." He made several trips into Abilene for supplies, ordered boots to be made, and found the town a "new one" that "appears to carry on a lively trade." He swapped horses, bought a wagon and harness for $153.00, and "a bill of goods from a Dutchman" that included three suits at $10.45 each, seven suits at $11.65, one suit at $14.00, 69¾ yards of calico at 8½¢ a yard, two overcoats at $37.50 each, seven "over shirts," and fifteen pair of boots at $3.66⅔ each, along with a number of other items. Part of this outlay of $260.17 he had made "with a view to making purchases to take home for speculation."

On a Friday, November 4, about nine o'clock in the morning, a train consisting of twelve wagons, nineteen loose horses, and two hands started back for Texas. Again the trip was largely uneventful. He paid the Kaws $1.00 for camping on their land near Council Grove; he got lost from his train when he had to go back to get his gun, and spent three nights wandering alone before he decided that he was ahead of his train and turned back; laid over one whole day because of heavy snow; continued to meet late-starting herds heading north; and spent three hours in the middle of one cold night backfiring against an encompassing prairie fire and rounding up and quieting the scared horses. Once he rode ahead of the train "in order to have time to dig some sasafras root to take home for tea." Another day was lost to an ordinary creek that was extraordinarily full and past fording.

Finally, on December 11, 1869, he showed up at home

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The Rise & Fall of

Alec Swan

BY HELENA HUNTINGTON SMITH

In 1961 Alexander Hamilton Swan, one of the greatest of western cattle kings, was elected to the National Cowboy Hall of Fame—also known as the Western Heritage Center—in Oklahoma City. It was a double honor, since Swan was named in the "at large" category alongside such national figures as Theodore Roosevelt, Will Rogers, Charles M. Russell, Frederic Remington, and Sam Houston. The citation refers to him as a "creator of great ranches, importer of purebreds, builder of the stockyards industry." He was all that and more. His name was synonymous with the Swan Land and Cattle Company, which controlled millions of acres of range and was capitalized at two and a half million 1880 dollars. In the words of Agnes Wright Spring, the Wyoming historian, "He was . . . unquestionably the best known man in the early cattle business from coast to coast and overseas." He also suffered one of its worst disasters, a catastrophe that has never been fully told. There were elements of Greek tragedy in the story: the fall of Icarus, who flew too high toward the sun and plunged into the sea; the twisting screws of pity and terror; and the figure of Fate, inscrutable and cruel, and frivolous, too, like a woman.

The severest winter in the history of the West up to then (it was not to be equalled until 1949) had come and gone when Alec Swan failed in the spring of 1887 with a crash that shook the cattle empire to its foundations. The winter's losses broke the back of the cattle

boom, but Swan's downfall was unconnected with the weather, because the returns, so to speak, were not yet in. He fell because of a beastly little fluke, like slipping on a banana peel.

Alec Swan, the cattle king, was not a young man. He had already left one lifetime behind him, as the youthful and hard-living West reckoned a lifetime, when he came to the West, and he was fifty-two years old at the time of his peak achievement in 1883.

Unlike most prominent Wyoming cattlemen, who came from substantial-to-wealthy backgrounds in the East and Great Britain, Swan was a country boy, a farmer's son who had grown up in the hillbilly region of southwestern Pennsylvania and had matured amidst Iowa's tall corn. He was born in 1831; in 1858, three years after he left the farm, he returned to Greene County, Iowa, and married Miss Lizzie Richie. They had two children. He spent a few years in Knox County, Ohio, where he had already started dealing in livestock and land, but where, in his own words, "no incidents of any importance transpired." Then for ten years, starting in 1862, he lived in Indianola, Iowa, still operating in livestock and land. "It was too tame for my ambitious nature and I longed for the more perfect freedom of a new country. My ambition was to rear and handle cattle, but the fond dream of my life was never realized until I reached the great grazing region of Wyoming. There was room enough in Wyoming to satisfy my fondest ambition and hopes." In 1873, at the age of forty-two, he moved there and his life began.

Eighteen seventy-three was a very early year in Wyoming's history. The Indians still held the northern half of the territory, and on the glorious half-empty ranges the grass grew tall and the cattle grew fat and multiplied. Naturally, the early comers grew rich. Swan is supposed to have started with 3,000 head of cattle; by 1879 he owned an estimated 19,000. (Allowance must be made for some rather windy exaggerations in all statements concerning Swan and, for that matter, most of the cattle kings.) Having virtually his pick of ranch sites, he knew how to choose the best: a well-watered location on Chugwater Creek not far from Cheyenne. And he was happy. In his own words: "For six years after I came to Wyoming I spent most of my time on the ranches amongst the cowboys, being one myself." But that brings the date up to 1879, the year the boom began, and thereafter his ranches saw very little of him as the mania for promotion gripped him like a disease.

He proliferated companies. From 1880 onward he became involved in enough partnerships and companies to make the head swim. Many of his associates were Chicago bankers and businessmen. Among the corporate names, following the original Swan Brothers, we find Swan Brothers and Frank, Swan and Anthony Land and Cattle Company, Horse Creek Land and Cattle Company, National Cattle Company, and Swan Brothers, Frank, and Bernheimer. He started the Union stockyards in South Omaha, which became one of the most important in the country; another stockyard near Des Moines; feed lots at Grand Island and Omaha. He was quick to recognize the importance of breeding up the scrawny Texas stock with an admixture of heavy English Herefords; in 1878 he made headlines by receiving two carloads of blooded bulls at Cheyenne. He had the vision to launch the Wyoming Hereford Association with a view to popularizing the English breed.

At the start of 1883 this hyperthyroid genius reached the climax of his career. The Swan Brothers and two other firms under his control pooled their herds and sold them to a Scotch-English syndicate, creating the gigantic Swan Land and Cattle Company at a capitalization of $2,553,825. The wizard from the West was the only American among seven directors, and he went back to Cheyenne as American manager at the then princely salary of $10,000 a year.

In appearance he was likened to Uncle Sam—tall, lanky figure, gray goatee, and piercing, bright blue eyes. He was casually American in his ways; an associate recalled sitting beside him on a baggage truck in the shade of a station platform while discussing yet another million-dollar deal. At home and overseas, his personal magnetism swept everything before it, and by 1885 his career apparently stood at its zenith. He swam in a sea of adulation. Even John Clay—who disliked him and later, in *My Life on the Range*, drove several additional nails into the coffin lid—admitted his "casual hypnotism" and his influence: "At Cheyenne groups of men sat around him and worshipped at his feet. In Chicago he was courted by bankers, commission men, breeders of fine cattle; in fact all classes of people in the livestock business. . . ." Surviving sketches written about him at this time are almost sycophantic in tone: "Mr. Swan erected an elegant residence, a fine affair, and the most commodious and costly barn in the territory. . . . [He] has been ever liberal and public spirited," and so on. To his success-worshipping fellow citizens, he was Mr. Success in person.

The impact of all this on the normally conservative Scots may be judged from the statement of one of the shareholders that appeared in a report to the first general meeting of the Swan Land and Cattle Company: "I would like to tell you that it is impossible to hear anything in that country but a favorable opinion of him. . . . You never hear his name mentioned without an encomium being passed upon him. The more I have seen him, the more I respect him."

But he revolved in his own orbit, a circle distinct from the tight little group of insiders that increasingly controlled the destinies of the Wyoming Stock Growers' Association, the legislature, and the territory itself. Swan had been the second president of the Association; but he had been elected in 1876, when it was still merely a little body of stock-owners in Laramie County, three years before its name and its nature were expanded to embrace all of Wyoming. The growing power of this enlarged body coincided with the secretarial reign of Thomas Sturgis, which lasted until 1887, and a silent cleavage developed between Sturgis and Swan. John Clay (in *My Life on the Range*) stated the matter openly: "There were two factions in cattle circles at that time in Cheyenne. A crowd worshipped at the shrine of Swan; another lot looked to Tom Sturgis for inspiration. . . . The lines of demarcation were plainly marked." Nowhere is there any reason given for the "lines of demarcation," but it is possible to put two and two together and hazard a guess.

When the territorial legislature met at the beginning of 1884, the Establishment, composed of Association insiders, was fighting tooth and nail for passage of the Maverick Bill, a highly controversial measure that sought to claim all unbranded animals of unknown ownership for the Wyoming Stock Growers' Association. Small ranchers and homesteaders were bitterly opposed, because they felt that they too might have lost some animals in the annual roundup melee, and that the territory, not a private group, ought to take possession of the mavericks. The bill became law, however, and was a prime cause of the increased rustling and the bad feeling that led to the Johnson County explosion eight years later. Alec Swan was opposed to the Maverick Bill. He was on an eastbound train when the news of his apostasy reached the ears of Secretary Sturgis. The latter wired an icy request for an explanation. Swan wired back:

> I never agreed to support the Maverick Bill. Never read it until after leaving Cheyenne. Am ready to give full support to any measure which will give justice to cattle owners. Do not consider present bill just in its provisions and if passed will be unsatisfactory in results.

The last was a true enough prediction, but anyone knowing the character of the ruling men of the day in Wyoming would realize that such a defection on the part of one of their own was not likely to be forgotten.

Equal to the fame of Swan himself was the fame of his great Two Bar outfit. It had everything to appeal to

The nucleus of Alec Swan's cattle empire was the choice spread on Chugwater Creek, near Cheyenne. Here it is seen as the headquarters of the giant Swan Land and Cattle Co

those who, like most Americans, loved to roll big figures off their tongues. The Swan Land and Cattle Company owned so many brands that it was said to have its own brand book for the guidance of the wagon bosses; but the Two Bars, the parent brand, was the name by which it was known forever after in song and story.

The cattle ranged from Ogalalla, Nebraska, to Fort Steele, Wyoming, and from the tracks of the Northern Pacific to the banks of the North Platte. The claimed range was fifty miles wide by a hundred and fifty miles long; but the cattle "drifted" perhaps double that distance. How many cattle? Different estimates placed the totals at 112,000, 120,000, 135,000, and "more than 200,000," but the *London Economist* in 1886 placed the total at 123,000, and Swan himself mentioned the figure of 120,000 in 1885. No one really cared how many cattle there were, except for a few increasingly skeptical shareholders, for the magnificent numbers helped to inflate the grand euphoria of the cattle boom.

Anyway, it was a big outfit.

It was also a great outfit. On the range level—as distinct from the level of board rooms and transatlantic liners—the "old Two Bars" had a fierce morale and a mighty pride in itself—a pride shared by everyone, from the managers in charge of the various headquarters down to foremen and wagon-bosses and even the youngest horse-wrangler, who in many cases rose up through the ranks and stuck for the rest of his life. It was all cemented by intense personal loyalty to Alec Swan, even though the men seldom saw him.

His cowboys were the best fed anywhere, with all the beef they could eat. And this generosity extended to neighboring settlers: "They were the best of all the larger outfits to the small ranchers who were trying to make a living," is one recollection. "They gave hundreds of quarters of beef to settlers. Whenever it was necessary for a cattle operator to send his man on the [Swan] roundup to gather his cattle, they were made to feel welcome. . . ." Since the question of who might or might not attend roundups with the large operators was so explosive as to burst eventually into blood and flame, this attitude of Swan's is significant.

Another revealing sidelight lies tantalizingly half told in the executive minutes of the Wyoming Stock Growers' Association. The date is June 26, 1886. The notation concerns the actions of a settler, a Mr. Allen, who had been called before the committee on charges that have a familiar ring:

> Mr. Allen made a statement explaining the circumstances under which he tied a calf belonging to Mr. Swain to the underbrush near his ranch and some distance from its mother, and giving his reasons for so doing. [For the benefit of the uninitiated, tying a calf down and driving the mother off was one method of appropriating the calf.] After some consideration, on motion of A. H. Swan, . . . the committee decided to exonerate Mr. Allen from the charge of having intended to steal said calf, and to dismiss the case with the admonition to Mr. Allen that it must not occur again.

What a pity that Mr. Allen's "reasons" have been lost to posterity. Whatever they were, the fact remains that Alec Swan was one of the very few owners who would have refused to prosecute in such a case.

IN 1884 THE ALREADY LARGE capitalization of the Swan Land and Cattle Company had been increased to three and three-quarter million dollars, the additional million and a quarter being used to purchase the herds and ranch properties of two old-time cowmen picturesquely known as "Hi" Kelly and "Pappy" Whitcomb. Both sales, of course, were based on the prevailing practice of "book count," whereby herds were bought and sold on the basis of figures carried on the company's books, plus a liberal allowance for "natural increase." But serious shortages developed in the Kelly and Whitcomb herds, pointing to the incredible conclusion that Alec Swan, old hand that he was, had allowed himself to be taken in on a book count swindle! As a result, 7,900 animals had to be written off, and there were frowns from the directors in their annual report for 1884 (issued in March of the following year).

In 1885 three thousand well-aged, marketable steers could not be found, and they too were chopped off the books. In the same year, the company turned out 11,500 Texas steers on a range already overstocked, when a few wise heads—and Alec Swan's should certainly have been among them—had by this time recognized the perils in overstocking. Most of the steers died of starvation or disease, and only 481 reached the market. Then came 1886, with worse and more of it: another write-off of herd numbers, with grumbling from the directors that the shortages were due to deficiency in the herds "as enumerated by the vendors at the time of sale." This was a direct slap at Swan, whose companies were the vendors. Definitely, his enterprises were in a shaky condition by 1887; but the irony of it is that so were the

Continued on page 66

BOOKS THAT WON THE WEST

The Guidebooks of the Forty-Niners & Fifty-Niners

BY RAY A. BILLINGTON

THE WESTERING URGE that through America's formative years drove men to the frontiers was a compound of many impulses, but one transcended all others. This was the hope of self-betterment. Men might be well enough off at home, but ahead, they knew, lay better farms, lusher pastures, fortunes in mineral wealth, the opportunity for professional and business men to "grow up with a new country." But the frontier magnet could attract only when word of the West's opportunities reached the East. During the centuries of expansion, a number of pioneers assumed the role of advertisers of the West: fur-trappers and soldiers spread news of the riches that lay ahead; missionaries preached the frontier's advantages with no less enthusiasm than they preached the Gospel; newspapers and promoters trumpeted the successive Wests as cornucopias of abundance where all might gather fortunes in worldly goods. Yet no medium more extravagantly proclaimed western opportunity than the guidebooks that both stimulated and shaped westward migration.

Most of the hundreds of guides published during the nineteenth century seemed little suited to their role. Many were shoddy pamphlets, only a few pages long, cheaply printed and bound in paper, illustrated by a caricature of a map seemingly designed to misguide rather than guide the user, and destined for speedy discard if not vengeful destruction at the end of the trail—a fate that accounts for their excessive rarity today. Yet an analysis of these guidebooks reveals that their authors were unusually sensitive to the social conditions of their day, and that they possessed a knowledge of human psychology that made their products effective propaganda.

These conclusions can be illustrated by comparing the thirty or more guidebooks used by the forty-niners on their way to California with the twenty-odd that a decade later helped touch off the rush of the fifty-niners to the Pikes Peak country of Colorado. All had three characteristics in common: they minimized the investment necessary to reach the gold fields; they pictured the journey westward as far shorter and easier than it was; and they magnified the wealth that awaited at the end of the trail. Yet in substantial ways the 1859 guidebooks differed from those of 1849. These differences help account for their effectiveness, and explain why they can be categorized as "Books That Won the West."

Before venturing on that speculation, one should recall a few indisputable facts concerning each of these rushes. Gold was discovered in California in January, 1848, but not until the late spring did Californians succumb to a

mining fever; and not until December did the East feel its full impact, even though the press had begun to pick up increasingly impressive tales from the diggings during the fall. But when President James K. Polk incorporated an enthusiastic account of California's wealth in his annual message to Congress, to be followed a few days later by the arrival in Washington of a messenger bearing 230 ounces of dust and nuggets, the whole country overnight went wildly, almost unaccountably, mad. Headlines proclaimed the discovery of a new El Dorado that would bring alive the dreams of Cortez and Pizarro. Merchants did a land-office business in rough clothes, broad felt hats, bowie knives, shovels, and washing pans. Songwriters capitalized on the craze with "The Gold Digger's Waltz" and "The Sacramento Gallop." Gold seems to have been the everyday talk of half the population and the substance of their dreams at night. "The coming of the Messiah, or the dawn of the Millennium," wrote one editor, "would not have excited anything like the interest."

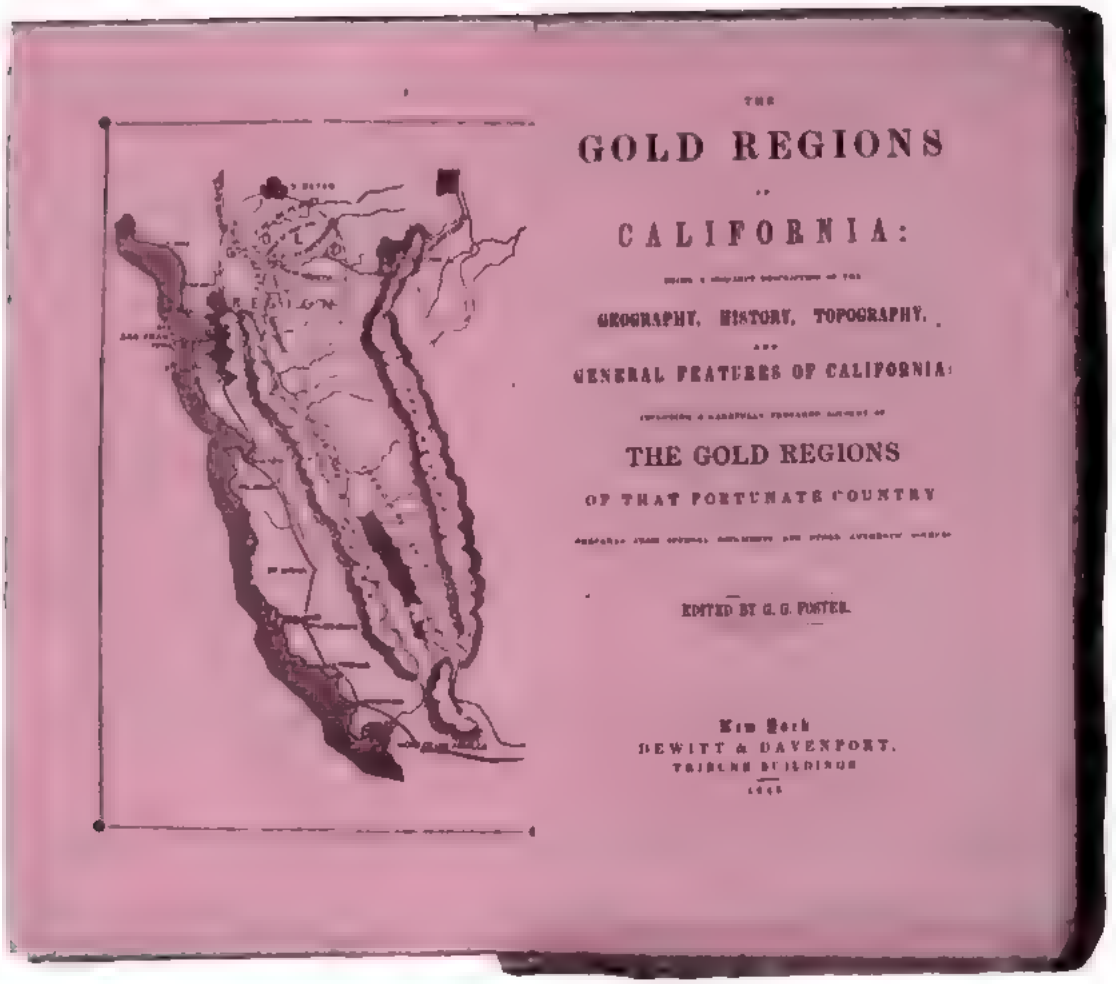
There was but slight reason for this insanity. California's placers were producing, but not in quantities guaranteed to enrich the multitudes soon to be attracted to them. Probably no one will ever know just how much gold was mined in 1848. Colonel Richard B. Mason, the military governor of the territory, estimated that between $30,000 and $50,000 was being extracted each day by three thousand or more miners; his report, incorporated in President Polk's congressional message, helped overcome Yankee skepticism and touch off the excitement. Colonel Mason's estimate was not wildly inconsistent with the calculations of modern scholars, who use customs records and coinage statistics to guess that the average miner that year made $20 a working day, and that the total yield of the mines was something more than $6,000,000. Such figures might seem mouth-watering to the eastern miner whose pay was about $1.25 a day; but any rational examination would show that the cost of the round trip to California, the astronomical prices charged for necessities in the mining camps, and the prospect of only about one hundred "pay days" a year (mining stopped when streams ran dry or were at flood stage), made the journey a doubtful investment.

Common sense, however, has never shaped human behavior during epidemics of gold fever; moreover, only the income side of the story was told in the East during the winter of 1848-1849, and only the tales of spectacular early returns were bandied about. Men who could afford passage fought for space on ships going around Cape Horn or to the Isthmus of Panama; those who could not pay spent the winter converting the family wagon into a prairie schooner and dreaming of the fortune that would be theirs at the end of the California trail.

Here was a situation made to order for guidebook authors and publishers: an army of potential readers eager for any scrap of information about the West and mining, yet so uninformed that they would buy anything that would feed their enthusiasm. Both authors and publishers responded predictably. Within the next months, more than thirty guidebooks were rushed from the presses and eagerly purchased.

First to appear, late in 1848 and early in 1849, were two types of publications that rivaled each other in uselessness. Some publishers hurried back into print older guides or reminiscences; two of the most popular were John C. Frémont's account of his exploring expeditions of 1843 and 1844—reprinted now with the alluring title *The California Guide Book*—and Lansford W. Hastings' *The Emigrants' Guide to Oregon and California*. Yet the latter was based on an 1842 expedition and contained the same faulty advice that had led the Donner party to disaster, while Frémont's narratives described the wanderings of an explorer with no concern for a direct route westward. Even more useless as guidebooks were the hastily assembled collections of government reports, newspaper clippings, and miscellaneous materials that were hurried into print under such interest-whetting titles as *California: and the Way to Get There*, or *California Gold Regions*. Starry-eyed purchasers, eager for practical advice on routes to the gold fields and mining methods, must have cursed their own gullibility when they surveyed the contents of some of these volumes: an essay by a British geologist who made no pretense of ever having seen California; articles on gold-extracting techniques used in Latin America; arguments in favor of a railroad to the Pacific; a description of grain-threshing methods used in Mexican America; the President's message proclaiming the discovery of gold; farming conditions at Santa Barbara; disquisitions on health conditions in South America; and proper etiquette toward fellow passengers on a sea voyage. Paltry fare indeed for one about to embark on a two-thousand-mile trek or eighteen-thousand-mile voyage to an unknown land.

Guidebooks of this sort were unabashedly fraudulent, but those that made a conscientious effort to provide use-



THE

GOLD REGIONS

OF

CALIFORNIA:

GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY, TOPOGRAPHY,

AND

GENERAL FEATURES OF CALIFORNIA:

THE GOLD REGIONS

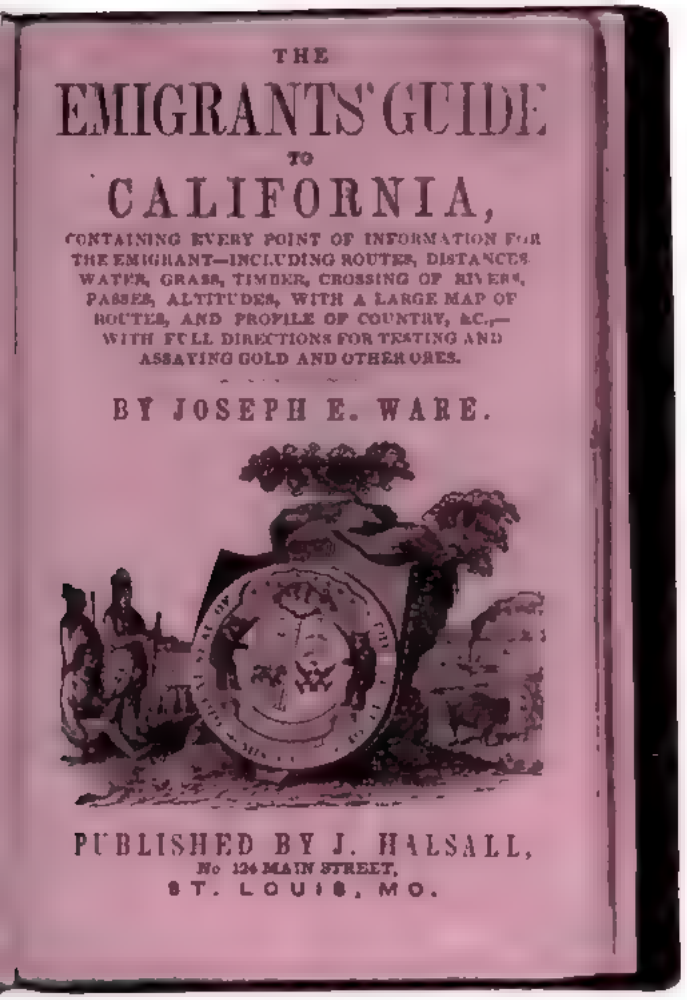
OF THAT FORTUNATE COUNTRY

EDITED BY G. G. FOSTER.

New York

DEWITT & DAVENPORT,

TRIBUNE BUILDINGS



THE

EMIGRANTS' GUIDE

TO

CALIFORNIA,

CONTAINING EVERY POINT OF INFORMATION FOR THE EMIGRANT—INCLUDING ROUTES, DISTANCES WATER, GRASS, TIMBER, CROSSING OF RIVERS, PASSES, ALTITUDES, WITH A LARGE MAP OF ROUTES, AND PROFILE OF COUNTRY, &C.,— WITH FULL DIRECTIONS FOR TESTING AND ASSAYING GOLD AND OTHER ORES.

BY JOSEPH E. WARE.

PUBLISHED BY J. HALSALL,

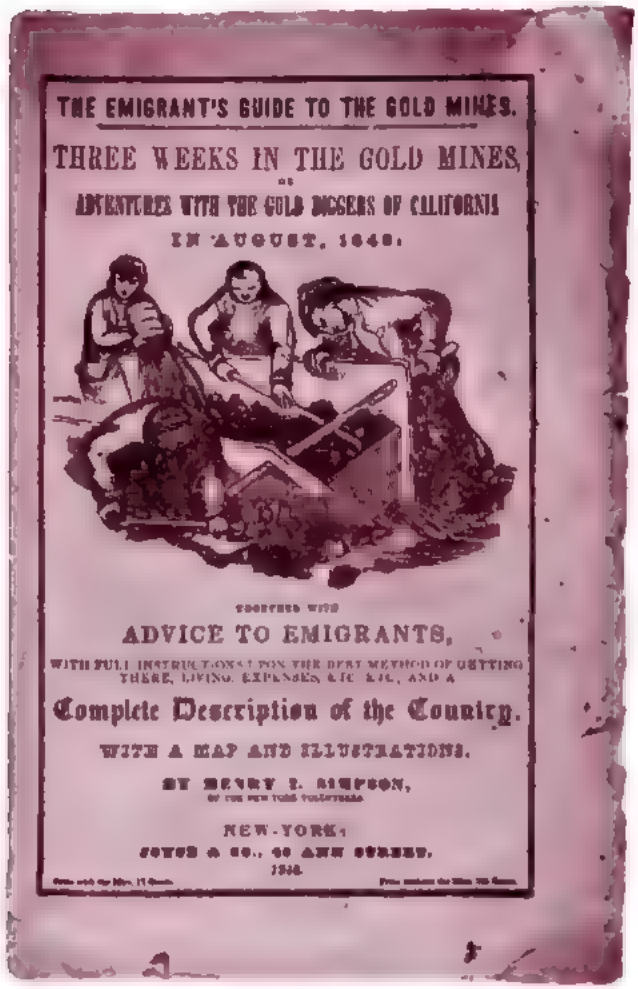
No 124 MAIN STREET,

ST. LOUIS, MO.

(Above) Foster's "carefully prepared account" placed the gold region in the flatlands of California's central valley. Joseph Ware's guide (below, left) was later off the presses (1849)—but much more useful.

All illustrations for this article are taken from original materials in the Everett D. Graff Collection of Western Americana in the Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois. This collection of 10,000 books, pamphlets, maps, broadsides, and manuscripts relating to the exploration, settlement, and development of the American West has been collated and catalogued by Colton Storm, and published for the Library by the University of Chicago Press. Professor Billington's article is adapted from an address given at the recent opening of an exhibit of Graff Collection materials.

AN ACCOUNT OF
CALIFORNIA,
AND THE
WONDERFUL GOLD REGIONS.
A New Arrival at the Gold Diggings
The Different Routes to California;
Information about the Country, and the Ancient and Modern Discoveries of Gold;
How to Test Precious Metals, Accounts of Gold Hunters;
Useful Reading for those going to California, or having Friends there.
ILLUSTRATED WITH MAPS AND ENGRAVINGS
BOSTON
Price, 12 cents.



ful information were often not much better. A few were carefully prepared; probably the best was Joseph E. Ware's *The Emigrant's Guide to California*, published in St. Louis in 1849 and compiled by a newspaperman who tried to sift the truth from a wide variety of travel information. But more were written by men obviously unfamiliar with western travel or mining, who relied on imagination rather than knowledge. The emigrants, whose ignorance rivaled that of the authors, had no means of sifting the good from the bad. As late as 1852, one overland emigrant reported, "A great variety of small books, each claiming to be correct, have been printed and may be [purchased] at all the principal places on the Missouri River, at about 25 cents each. We have several different kinds on our train, none of which can be relied on." An earlier gold-seeker wrote in his trail diary: "There were few, if any, who possessed a definite knowledge of the road and, as a consequence, there was great suffering."

Great suffering indeed. For guidebook authors deliberately attempted to lure emigrants to California, persuading many to make the trying journey who had neither the resources nor the stamina for life on the trail. If thousands of young men started westward impelled by the belief that they could stroll comfortably to the diggings and there stuff their pockets with nuggets, the guidebooks were at least partially responsible.

Bad advice on the equipment necessary for the journey was of two sorts. Some was so vague as to be useless: thus one guide counseled taking supplies to sustain a family for three months, and "a stout covered wagon, to be drawn either by oxen or mules, as the case may be. Thus provided," the author assured his readers, "the American Continent may be crossed at various points, without difficulty." Others encouraged the natural proclivity of the emigrants to overload their wagons with nonessentials; travelers were advised not only to burden themselves with excessive quantities of flour and bacon, but to take an alcohol stove for use when buffalo chips were wet, a sheet iron stove, two India-rubber boats large enough to float a wagon across swollen streams, wading boots, mosquito bars, an air mattress, a rubber cloth to protect the wagon during rains, a fly trap, and even (in one English guidebook) an Etna stove large enough to boil water for two cups of tea, "the most refreshing thing possible after a long and fatiguing day's journey." When emigrants added to these luxuries the patented gold-washing machines sold at all embarkation

Inside were scenes more lively than the covers: " 'Come Harry,' said he, . . . While with a quiet, triumphant air, he pointed to . . . the richest treasure the world ever saw!"

points, there was little wonder that the last thousand miles were so strewn with discarded objects that a man could walk the entire length of the Humboldt River without touching the ground.

The fantastic advice on equipment was compounded when guidebook authors described the overland routes to California, either giving directions that ranged from disarmingly vague to utterly false, or painting the trail as a well-traveled highway where scarcely an obstacle stood between the miner and the gold-shot earth of California.

In so doing, authors performed feats of geographic legerdemain marvelous to behold; they shrank the towering Sierra to molehills and transformed the desert trails of the Southwest into flower-bedecked highways. "The [Sierra Nevada] mountains," wrote the early (1842) and usually sensible traveler, John Bidwell, whose reminiscences found some use as a guide, "become low, so gradual that you are at them before you are aware of it.—One day will take you to the plains of the San Joaquin." "There are," remarked another, "no difficulties on the road." Even the bleak plains and deserts of the Santa Fe route westward were transmuted into flowered gardens. There, one imaginative author wrote, "the beauty of the flowers, and feathered throng, form no small part of . . . [the] pleasure, many of the flowers form a grand bouquet, from fifty to ninety feet in circumference, and from eight to ten feet high, yielding the most delicious perfume, and anon a lofty tree, covered with beautiful vines, whose light tendrils clinging to their tops float in the morning air in circling beauty." The well-traveled central route along the Platte River and through South Pass was held to offer equally tempting inducements. There a smooth highway led westward, with every stream bridged, and with plentiful Mormon communities along the way where the weary journeyer could buy supplies at lower prices than in Chicago or St. Louis. The soil was unbelievably fertile, producing spontaneous oats, flax, and "luxurious grasses" so nutritious that draft animals actually gained weight as they marched. Game was plentiful, with buffalo, deer, wild turkeys, prairie chickens, and other fowl in "inexhaustible abundance." Or, if the traveler tired of his journey, he could take out a farm at any point between the Mississippi and the Rockies; that whole region was a veritable "Garden of Eden . . . a country whose climate is mild and salubrious, and whose soil produces spontaneously many of the fruits and grains of tropical and temperate regions, and is susceptible of being made to yield larger crops of useful vegetables than any of the organized states."

Emigrants with a grain of common sense no doubt recognized the implausibility of imaginative descriptions such as these, but less easy to detect was the advice that led travelers over impassable trails or detours. Guidebook authors unfamiliar with the West, misled by inaccurate maps, urged their readers to ascend the Colorado River of Texas by ship to Austin, "thence," as one put it, "across country to El Paso . . . ; the route then passes westward through New Mexico and Sonora, to the River Gila, and then runs west to San Diego." This was the desert trail that led the Texan Santa Fe expedition of 1841 to disaster, and that in its western portions tested the stamina of such hardened fur-trappers as Jedediah Strong Smith and James Ohio Pattie. Yet one author assured readers that "the natural difficulties of this route are not great," while another promised that if the miners left in May, strawberries would be ripening along the entire trail. Even this route was preferable to one recommended by an English writer who suggested

FOR PIKE'S PEAK, HO!
DAILY U. S. MAIL LINE
Through to Denver City in 6 1-2 Days!
THE CENTRAL
OVERLAND, CALIFORNIA
AND
PIKE'S PEAK EXPRESS CO.
FORMERLY JONES, RUSSELL & CO.
FROM ST. JOSEPH
DENVER CITY.
ANY NUMBER OF EXTRA COACHES
MEALS PROVIDED AT THE STATIONS AT REASONABLE PRICES!
THE CALIFORNIA
PONY EXPRESS
TEN DAYS TO SAN FRANCISCO!
All Points in California, Salt Lake and Carson Valley!

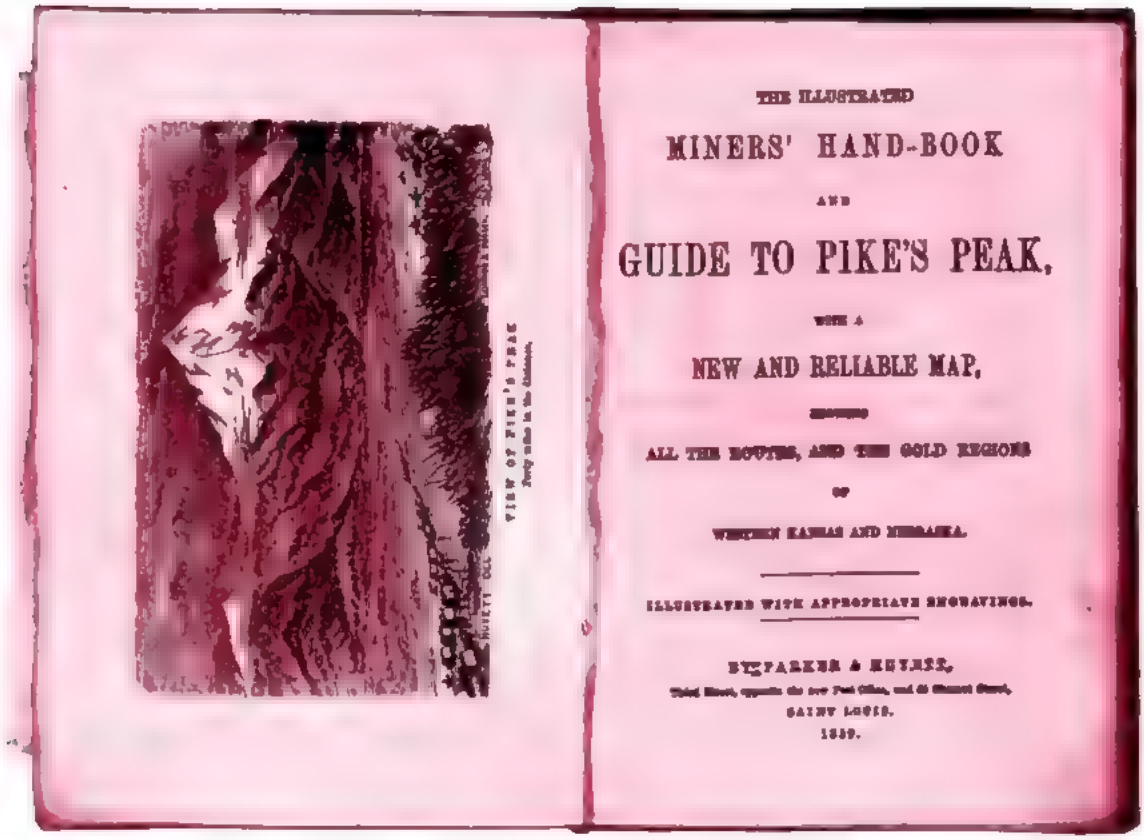
Ho! For the Humbug Hills! Western merchants and shippers found the synthetic gold rush to Pike's Peak a sure-fire cure for business distress.

that emigrants journey to Santa Fe, then join one of the caravans that regularly marched westward through such cities as Laguna, Acomo, and Zuni to the metropolis of Concepcio at the crossing of the Colorado River. From that point the trail led across a desert to San Diego—but the caravans stopped at conveniently spaced oases! The author of these distortions had apparently mistaken Indian pueblos for cities, and the Old Spanish Trail for a passable road.

Those who survived these misdirections would be richly rewarded—if the guidebooks were to be believed. The stock in trade of even the most accurate was the wealth of the mines: in California a fortune could be had for the stooping. Gold was *everywhere;* "... sparkling in the sun and glittering in its streams. It lies on the open plain, in the shadows of the deep ravine, and glows on the summit of the mountains."

"Lumps of pure gold have been picked up," one writer testified, "each large enough to make a diadem." Another reported that Californians were picking up gold as readily as hogs rooted up ground nuts, and averaging eight or ten ounces a day. "No capital is required to obtain this gold," readers were assured, "as the laboring man wants nothing but his pick and shovel and tin pan, with which to dig and wash the gravel; and many frequently pick gold out of the crevices of rock with their butcher knives, in pieces of from one to six ounces." Again and again the guidebooks repeated the more reliable reports of spectacular finds: of a soldier who amassed $1,500 in dust on a twenty-day leave; of seven men in the Feather River diggings who extracted 273 pounds in seven weeks and two days; of four men who took $17,000 in gold from one canyon. These were blood-tingling statistics indeed.

The gullible might accept even the unlikelier tales concocted by a few of the more imaginative guidebook writers. One such professed to having spent three weeks in the mines in 1848 with a partner named Charlie Holmes. He described one discovery thus: Holmes was a little ahead as they prospected a ravine. "I heard him call me in a low, unexcited voice, and answered carelessly, for I was picking up some fine specimens. 'Come Harry,' said he again: and I left my occupation to go to him. When I got up to him he was holding in his hand a piece of gold about as large and thick as my double hands outspread; while with a quiet, triumphant air, he pointed to a bed he had cleared away, where gleamed the richest treasure the world ever saw! The flake which,



"Gold," *cried Parker & Huyatt's guidebook, "will be found there in a solid mass . . ."*

with his small pickaxe, Holmes had peeled off, was as nothing to those which, bedded in stone and compact gravel, lay on each side of the ravine or gully which ran almost parallel with the river." Holmes and his partner took $50,000 in gold from that placer before having to return to the coast for fresh supplies.

When guidebooks paraded such extravagances as sober truth, their more susceptible readers could be pardoned for believing the exaggerations of the day's humorists. One told of a miner who had found a nugget weighing 839 pounds; unable to move it, and afraid it would be stolen, he had been sitting on it for sixty-seven days and at last report was offering $27,000 for a plate of beans. Another described a magnetic grease that sold for $94 a box and was applied to the body of a miner; thus equipped he could roll down any hill, picking up a fortune in gold with each turn. Still another pictured a poker game at the mines with the bets in dust. One man opened with a handful, the next raised him a double handful, and the third went a pint better. Said the first: "I go you a quart beter." "Well," said the second. "I see that and go you a gallon better." "Here Jim," said the third, "watch my pile while I go out and dig enough to call him."

To men nurtured with such visions, the realities of the trail and mining camps most often came as bitter disillusionment. Misled by faulty advice on equipment and trails, thousands were overtaken with near starvation long before they reached California. One typical emigrant recorded that his party's supplies were exhausted because they had laid in insufficient food, "chiefly on account of false reports . . . of the distance [in the guidebooks we read]. We having travelled about as far already, as we understood would take us to the Mines, and have, as yet, fully five hundred miles to go." These strictures were echoed in diary after diary; miners told of exhausted draft animals, of men shuffling from wagon train to wagon train begging a mouthful of food. "It is hard," wrote one, "to turn away a starving man 1500 miles one way, and 300 the other, from any source of supply, but we were obliged to do it." Those who reached the mines were further disillusioned, for every square rod of known pay dirt seemed already preempted. "Every road and by-path," one man wrote, "was crowded with a floating population of itinerant miners, who were continually wandering from place to place, and district to district, in search of some untenanted spot, in which to try the realities of their golden dreams." Little wonder

that their letters home urged others not to come, or that the lilting "Oh Susannah" that had buoyed their steps on the outward journey was rewritten now:

But I'm bound off, I've got my load,
My shovel I've laid down,
My pick and crow and pan and spoon,
I've left upon the ground.
My cradle I can rock at home,
If ever there I get,
And there I'm bound with empty purse
And pockets all to let.

The implausible advice and unbelievable tales of riches that overfired the imaginations of the forty-niners were the creation of individual authors and publishers who had no crasser motive than to peddle their guidebooks as widely as possible. The guides that a decade later helped create the rush of the fifty-niners to the Pikes Peak country had a more ambitious commercial purpose; they were designed to sell not only books but merchandise. They attempted, on the one hand, to create the impression that the new diggings were cheaply and easily accessible, and so limitless in extent that there was gold aplenty for all who sought it—thus inspiring a mass migration. And they tried, on the other hand, to direct this migration through certain outfitting towns along the Missouri River whose merchants partially underwrote the expenses of publication. This dual purpose meant that the fifty-niner guidebooks would distort the truth much more flagrantly than those of a decade earlier, and that the disillusionment of the miners would be proportionately greater.

The nation's economy provided authors and publishers with a good oportunity for their enterprise. The Panic of 1857 left business activity stagnant in the Mississippi Valley, and merchants' shelves stood crowded with unsold goods. A gold rush was the kind of thing that could lift the pall of depression, particularly for merchants in the outfittings towns that fringed the western settlements: Kansas City, Independence, Leavenworth, St. Joseph, and Council Bluffs. Their chance came in the fall of 1858 when a party of prospectors under William Green Russell found pay dirt on the South Platte River a few miles above Cherry Creek. The find was hardly spectacular, but the miners continued operations until mid-September, when they turned to building a town on the site of modern Denver. In all, miners took out less than one thousand dollars in dust that summer and fall, yet no more was needed by promoters in the river towns. Claims that would have been thought not worth the digging in '48 were the foundation of a major gold rush in '59.

A trader touched off the conflagration that fall when he washed out a sackful of earth on the streets of Kansas City and reported twenty-five cents in gold to the panful. Once more newspapers flamed the discovery of a new El Dorado; once more imaginative tales of rich strikes flooded the western press. This was welcome news to the thousands and thousands of men put out of work by the depression. They had only to find some means of reaching the Pikes Peak country to turn poverty into affluence. They spent the winter of 1858-59 laboring at small tasks to buy the "outfits" needed for their venture and dreaming of the fortune that would soon be theirs. "There is," reported the New York *Tribune*, "scarcely a village west of Ohio in which some are not fitting for and impatiently waiting the day when a start may be prudently made for the neighborhood of Pikes Peak."

The guidebook authors who seized on this ready-made market realized that most of their purchasers would be poor, and that a mass migration could be sparked only if they proved that little capital was needed to reach the mines. All counseled minimum purchases of equipment, recommending that fancy articles be left at home and that parties carry only food and tools needed for six months in the diggings; miners were cautioned to take "no useless knick-knacks, [or] superfluous toilet arrangements," such as "white Marseilles shirts, fancy gaiters and kids." If they followed this sensible advice, they were told, four men could journey to Pikes Peak and mine for six months at a total cost ranging from $517.25 to $632.00, or approximately $160 a person. One guide urged its readers to send their supplies by wagon freight, then walk beside the wagons and eat their own food. This would cost only $60 to $75, allowing men to reach the mines, labor for four or five months, and return home *"at a less cost than it will require to sustain them at home."*

The Pikes Peak guidebooks were unanimous in insisting that the mines could be reached cheaply; but they parted company in suggesting routes, for each sought to direct its readers through a particular outfitting town. Every author tried to minimize the distance and exaggerate the ease of his favored route while magnifying the length and stressing the hardships of all others. Three trails could be used: westward along the Platte River from Council Bluffs or St. Joseph; southwest from Kan-

Continued on page 72

GOLD RUSH *Daguerreotypes*

BY ROBERT A. WEINSTEIN

WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS there are surviving daguerrean views of all of the early American cities of importance. There are many single views as well as some panoramas comprising as many as eight plates. But of all mid-nineteenth century cities in the United States, none was more photographed by the daguerrean artist than the famed City of Gold, San Francisco, and no activity was so thoroughly documented as the total, frenzied human phenomenon still known to us as *the* Gold Rush.

By 1839 impatient mankind had been itching for a few hundred years to discover a satisfactory way to make photographs. The announced discovery of the daguerreotype process marked the end of a long series of near misses by many "servants of science" who had sought the means of making "sun pictures" permanent. Most of the bits and pieces of the optical-chemical process ultimately discovered jointly by Niépce and Daguerre in 1839 had been known and used for some years previously.

The new process quickly won enthusiastic support, although on first reading it seemed both tedious and difficult for the layman. Almost immediately daguerreotypy swept throughout much of the Western world and daguerrean artists soon became almost as common as tinsmiths. Professional operators of every sort soon abounded and eager amateurs flocked to classes of instruction. Plush "Daguerrian Parlors" sprang up almost at once in most large cities of the world. Official and unofficial representatives of M. Daguerre traveled widely, conducting classes in the new process and selling equipment. It is impossible now to accurately estimate the exact number of daguerreotype plates produced in the early 1840's but authorities agree that they exceeded several millions throughout all the world.

"It is a picture which cannot be disputed — it carries with it evidence which God himself gives through the unerring light of the world's great luminary. . . ."

Few homes of any means were without examples of the new "sun pictures." Important and titled individuals bought daguerreotypes of every type of subject the process could handle at all successfully. Many travelers carried small daguerreotypes of loved ones to assuage the loneliness of prolonged absences. Other travelers carried their own daguerreotype equipment, or a traveling companion frequently doubled as the photographer, completing a permanent visual record of the journey. John H. Stephens and Frederick Catherwood did precisely that on their Yucatan expedition, revealing to an awed world the magnificent temple ruins of Chichen-Itza.

Nothing seemed to escape the daguerreotype lens if a successful plate could be expected from the effort. The new process had become a valid means of artistic expression, then was quickly transformed into a booming business, emerging finally as a popular hobby bordering on near mania.

What was the daguerreotype to have so seized the imagination of people throughout the world? It has been characterized as a "*mirror with a memory.*" Inventive and curious minds had for many years pondered

the possibilities of "fixing" in some permanent fashion the image seen in an ordinary mirror. Thousands of experiments were tried, ranging from the ridiculous to the penetratingly perceptive. Giants of chemical and photographic research went as far as they were able. Such men as Wedgewood, Herschel, Fox-Talbot, and Niepce almost made it. No single experimenter seemed able to find the whole process, although many individuals produced fragmentary results of importance. An astonishing variety and combination of image-bearing surfaces and chemicals were tried by eager alchemists, and even quite serious attempts to duplicate what was then believed to be the functioning of the human eye were attempted.

Among many, Louis-Jacques Mandé Daguerre, painter, member of the Legion of Honor, and manager of the Paris Diorama, had tried to fix the image projected by the *camera obscura* in some permanent fashion. Painting in the naturalistic tradition, attempting to perfectly reproduce nature's beauty upon canvas in color, M. Daguerre had followed many experiments with the most intense interest. Combining at least one decisive new discovery of J. N. Niépce with certain new discoveries of his own, Daguerre at long last discovered the first workable solution to fixing a permanent photo-chemical image on metal.

Compared with the incredible ease of operating a Polaroid camera of today, the business of making a picture in 1839 seems almost unthinkable. A sheet of thin copper was silver-plated and buffed to a mirror-like lustre. It was then so placed in a box that the silvered surface could be exposed to the vapors arising from a heated pot of iodine. The resulting thin layer of yellow-colored, silver iodide was highly sensitive to the chemical action of natural light. This sensitized plate was placed in a lightproof wooden holder and inserted into the daguerreotype camera. The camera lens was normally covered by a lightproof lens cap. With the subject in position and the camera properly focused, the lens cap was removed for the appropriate exposure time and then replaced over the open lens once more. The plate thus exposed to the sun's rays was then placed in the developing box, with the sensitive side facing a heating pot of mercury. The mercury fumes "developed" the latent image formed on the plate by the camera. After development the plate was placed in a bath of hyposulphide of soda. This solution "fixed" the visible image on the plate permanently. Finally the completed plate was washed carefully in distilled water to remove the residual chemicals, and after drying over an open flame, it was ready for mounting. As the image-bearing surface of the plate was very easily scratched or might be significantly disfigured by casual fingerprints, it was generally mounted under glass in a standardized, gutta-percha, lidded case.

Courses of instruction and instruction manuals were soon much in demand, as care and precision at all stages of the work were the key to successful results. In spite of the precise work required, the production and sale of daguerreotypes and daguerreotype equipment soared in the nine years between 1839 and the discovery of gold in California in 1848. The increasing popularity of these new "magic mirrors" brought thousands of new operators into the field. Soon prices had been reduced by competition to the point that daguerreotypes were as much within the means of the general public as are good quality studio portraits today.

The daguerrean process was introduced to the United States by Samuel F. B. Morse in the winter of 1839. Almost needless to say, it soon captured the fancy of a prospering and science-minded nation. Improvement in all phases of daguerreotypy followed one another in rapid succession. Cameras, lenses, camera stands, developing and plate preparation devices, chemicals, and chemical processes were all refined and improved, and by 1849 daguerrean photography in the United States was a big business.

Variants of the daguerreotype process followed one another in bewildering succession. First came the ambrotype, a plate of glass on which a *negative* image was developed. By coating the reverse side of the glass with a lightproof substance the negative image appears to the viewer as a positive image. The picture on glass was *always* seen as a positive while the daguerreotype appeared *either* as a negative or a positive depending on the angle at which the light struck the silvered surface.

Shortly after the ambrotype, the collodion negative on glass (discovered by F. Scott Archer in 1851) became quite popular. This new process soon competed successfully with daguerreotypes and ambrotypes as it was the *only one* allowing numberless paper prints to be made from the original collodion negative. Each daguerreotype or ambrotype needed to be made separately. The *only* way to duplicate a daguerreotype or an ambrotype was to take a new daguerreotype or ambrotype of the original.

In time every imaginable type of surface was tried for photographic purposes. Leather, china, wood all served, but the most successful was thin sheet metal. Pictures made on this surface had a lackluster look and were known as tintypes. They were popular for almost 75 years after their discovery. They were cheap, quickly produced, and very durable.

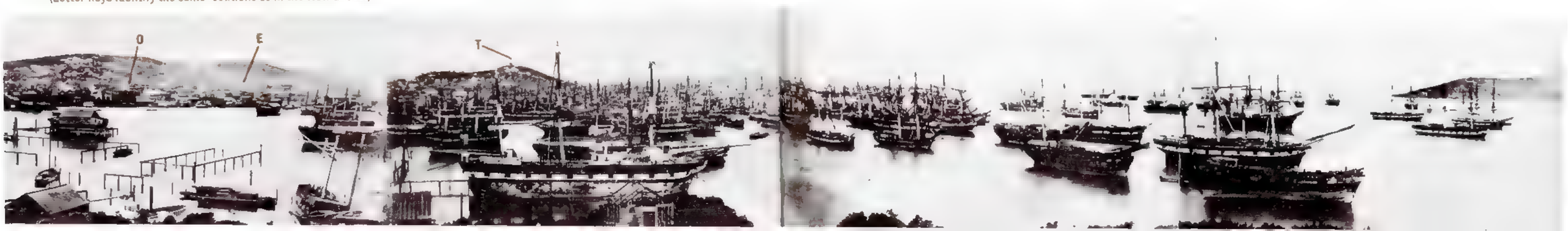
The overwhelming bulk of daguerreotype plates made were portraits. They ranged through a variety of different size plates. Whole plates were 6½" x 8½", a sixteenth plate was 1⅜" x 1⅝". Occasionally mammoth plates were used, measuring 13½" x 16½". At one time small, circular daguerreotypes, known as "buttons," were sold for portraits. Although portraits were his stock in trade, the daguerreotypist could make a picture of anything the sun shone upon — though outdoor pictures, or "views," presented certain special problems.

Initially, the harsh light of the direct rays of the sun were difficult to

(Above) The view from Nob Hill in the spring of 1851: North Beach at the left Rincon Point at the right

Niantic ,see p. 401 at Sansome and Clay

(Below) Yerba Buena Cove and the city from Rincon Point, probably in 1852. (Letter-keys identify the same locations as in the view above.)



control successfully. A diffused light through a slanted window became the preferred studio arrangement. The problem of "image reversal" of daguerrean subjects was a vexing one. It didn't matter quite so much in the portraits, as people were accustomed to seeing themselves reversed in mirrors, anyway, but a photograph of a public building, a store, or a steam locomotive with the painted names reading backwards was indeed disturbing, and so daguerreotype lenses came to be fitted with mirrors or prisms to turn things around "right side to." Movement was a very great problem, as the "film speed" of the iodine-coated plates was quite slow. The first outdoor exposures with lenses having neither diaphragm stops nor shutters ranged between five and seventy minutes. As equipment improved, it was possible to reduce exposure time to seconds. A twenty-second exposure for an indoor portrait became quite common. An iron headrest, to insure the sitter's immobility, became a standard fixture in the daguerrean studio. In out-of-doors views we can often see shadows of moving people or animals. Swiftly flowing water turned to a milky blur, while fluttering leaves or brush often interfered with an otherwise quite sharp and clear view.

With the wider availability of large-aperture Voigtlander lenses and improved methods of preparing faster coatings for plates, the making of outdoor views became much easier and the number of such views increased enormously. It seemed that nothing was immune from the daguerreotypist's camera. For a nation as huge as the United States of America, as diverse in its many peoples, as overwhelming in its geographic variety, as isolated as its many citizens were in small frontier communities, the sudden opportunity to "see" the wonders of this country and many of its peoples was too much for the average American to miss.

Clearly, many thousands more plates were made in the United States than have survived the attrition of time. The remaining plates are rich documents of history. We have, for example, a small group of plates taken of the U.S. Army campaigning in Mexico in 1847. Portraits of Revolutionary War personages, late in their declining years, can be found in our archives. There are a significant number of plates of early American cities and towns. Even daguerreotypes of train wrecks, ravaging city fires, clipper ships, and old ships-of-the-line in drydock have survived in good condition.

Notable are a number of breath-catching panoramic views of some of the larger cities, numbering from five to eight whole daguerreotype plates. In 1848 two daguerreotypists, Charles Fontayne and William S. Porter, produced an eight-plate panorama of the waterfront of Cincinnati, Ohio. This set of plates, now owned by the Cincinnati Public Library, is so detailed and so well preserved that it is possible to read names on buildings and on riverboats along the levee. For San Francisco in the Gold Rush period, there are a half-dozen panoramas, as well as many single-plate views. No other city in all the United States received so much attention from both amateur and professional daguerreotypists as did the Gold Rush Eldorado on the Bay of San Francisco.

We can never know exactly how many of these early daguerreotypists flocked to San Francisco and the California Gold Fields. They were not all Americans; rather they were as cosmopolitan as the miners who arrived each day from every corner of the world. If among them were many professional daguerreotypists intending to make a business of it in San Francisco, few enough of them seemed to have done so.

The list of "daguerrian artists" in *Kimball's City Directory of 1850* is very slim. One of these few is a Mrs. Julia Shannon. She is entered under the dual occupations of midwife and "daguerrian," suggesting the precarious character of early day photographic business ventures in San Francisco. Beaumont Newhall, Director of the George Eastman House, believes our Mrs. Julia Shannon to be the first Gold Rush daguerreotypist.

J. M. Ford opened a daguerrean gallery on Montgomery Street in 1854 and prospered. Fred Coombs, a cur

The heart of the city: 1—The Jenny Lind Theater facing "The Plaza" (Portsmouth Square) had by this date (1853) been bought for a city hall and was undergoing a scandalously expensive reconstruction. 2 — The St Francis Hotel on Clay Street was an early landmark; consisting of a pile of prefabricated frame cottages (similar to those seen at the left in the view on p. 37, it burned not long after this picture was made. 3—The leveled site of the famous Montgomery Block, largest business block in the West when it was completed at the end of 1853

From Nob Hill early in 1853: Rebuilt swiftly after the conflagrations of May and June, 1851, San Francisco was on the verge of a construction boom that would transform it into a real city. (Compare with the view on p. 49.)

T — Telegraph Hill. E — El Dorado. N — Site of storeship **Niantic** (burned in 1851). O — Oriental Hotel

iously erratic individual, offered his talents as a daguerreotypist to San Franciscans early in 1850. We are indebted to Fred Coombs for a group of our finest, earliest views north and south along both sides of Montgomery Street. After the fire of May 4, 1851, Coombs apparently gave up the art forever. He soon reappeared on San Francisco streets dressed in Colonial costume, calling himself George Washington Coombs and offering a phrenology and marriage brokerage service to the interested. He remains a well-remembered San Francisco character.

Very important is the work of an elusive George Johnson, who is credited with taking, from the roofs of buildings on Montgomery Street, the well-known two-plate panorama of the shipping in Yerba Buena Cove in the spring of 1851. No further evidence of his work has yet come to light. William Shew, a former Boston gallery operator and daguerreotype case manufacturer, made a five-plate panorama of San Francisco Bay from Rincon Point. Showing the Bay choked with abandoned ships, this celebrated and oft-reproduced work is in the Smithsonian Institution and is one of the earliest known panoramas of the city. Albert Southworth, of the widely known eastern daguerrean partnership of Southworth and Hawes, came to California to find gold. A few views of early San Francisco in the possession of the American Antiquarian Society may possibly be his work.

Henry Bradley, a South Carolinian, is recorded as offering daguerreotype plates for eight dollars and upwards. The size of the plate, the frame, case, *etc.*, undoubtedly boosted this price. The *Alta California* of February 1, 1851, glowingly describes a five-plate panorama of the city taken by a Mr. S. C. McIntyre of Tallahassee, Florida. We know that others were taken as well, as six known panoramas of early San Francisco have been found over the intervening years. While a few are complete there are individual plates missing from others. They vary in condition, having been subject to neglect and in some cases thoughtless handling as well. It is tantalizing not to be able to ascribe these astonishing panoramas to particular daguerreotypists.

The most exciting, and in some ways the most exasperating, daguerreotypist working in San Francisco was the slight, mild-mannered Robert Vance. He built a successful business, embracing a number of galleries in and around the Bay area. In 1851 he offered for sale, at an exhibition he organized in New York City, over *three hundred* whole-plate views of the Gold Rush metropolis. There is presently in the New York Public Library a copy of the printed catalogue of this exhibition distributed to the New York citizenry of 1851. Mr. Vance wrote:

> These Views are no exaggerated and high-colored sketches, got up to produce effect, but are as every daguerreotype must be, the stereotyped impression of the real thing itself
>
> They embrace among a variety of others, a splendid Panoramic View of San Francisco . . . Also views of Stockton, Coloma, Carson's Creek, Makalame Hill, the Old Mill where the gold was first discovered, Nevada, Gold Run, Marysville, Sacramento, Benicia, &c. Also a large collection of views taken of the miners at work, in different localities; also a likeness of Capt. Sutter, and a large collection of sketches of the different tribes of Indians on the Pacific Coast.

At this writing this unbelievable collection of Gold Rush daguerreotypes appears to have been totally lost!

There are many conflicting versions of the loss. As Mr. Vance could not realize his financial hopes from the sales at the New York exhibition he offered the entire collection for sale in 1852. Jeremiah Gurney, a New York gallery operator, bought them all, keeping them only a year. He sold them in 1853 to John H. Fitzgibbon, who displayed them prominently in his St. Louis daguerrean gallery in 1856. Fitzgibbon sold his St. Louis gallery in 1861 and fled to the South at the outbreak of the Civil War. He was later captured by the Union Army and sent to Cuba as a prisoner of war. He returned to St. Louis after his release and opened a new photographic gallery. Although in his later years Fitzgibbon wrote of the pioneer days of daguerreotypy and his personal reminiscences as well, he offered no clue to the whereabouts of the missing Vance daguerreotypes.

A very interesting by-product of the daguerreotype popularity was their rather widespread use as models by newspaper artists of the time. In the absence of the half-tone process, lithographic artists and wood engravers produced suitable illustrations for the contemporary illustrated newspapers. Often an artist or editor would openly acknowledge the daguerreotype as a model. In the *Annals of San Francisco,* the frontispiece is a copper engraving attributed to a daguerreotype made by J. M. Ford. As it is a view of Montgomery Street, the self-same Mr. Ford's daguerrean gallery is shown quite clearly in the engraving. Perhaps the most widely-known example is the etching of San Francisco in 1856 by Charles Méryon. This etching is based on a five-plate daguerreotype panorama, maker unknown, and is so credited on the etching. Not the least of Méryon's problems was the fact that each plate had its own separate vanishing point. Méryon needed to resolve the five separate vanishing points into one in his etching.

While there are a number of surviving daguerreotype views of San Francisco and the Gold Rush towns, they are not in great abundance, and they are far outnumbered by the many surviving portraits, identified and unidentified. There must have been thousands of such portraits made, ranging from pictures of an individual through groups of friends, associates, or even momentary traveling or gambling companions.

One can see clearly in these portraits the newly-arrived, ill-at-ease young miners. These "green" Argonauts, young, eager, and terribly inexperienced in life, often dressed for their miners' portraits in a mad guess at what the "in" miner ought to wear. What a bloodthirsty and terrifying sight! Here can be seen the rough calico or leather shirt, the wide leather belt adorned with a shiny brass buckle, wide-brimmed felt hat, and the menacing Navy Model of Samuel Colt's revolver stuck, butt out, into the leather belt or even held in the hand. To top all this off, there was the studiously grown, carefully trimmed beard, product of a five-month Cape Horn passage, and the fiercest, grown-up glare the bewildered, newly-arrived tyro could muster.

There are many delightful and charming social commentaries contained in the early San Francisco daguerreotype portraits. The newly-successful business "types" were not above being enshrined on the silvered mirror. Robert Vance specialized in such portraits and produced many of them. To him, in particular, we are indebted for the preserved likenesses of silver-tongued Samuel Brannan (the Mormon apostate), William S. Coleman (merchant and Vigilance Committee leader), W. D. M. Howard (financier), the mysterious Mr. Talbot Green, and other public and business personalities of the time.

Everybody and everything was fair and profitable game for the daguerreotype camera. The few illustrated newspapers of the times used wood engravings that were poor conjectures of the *real* scene. Photographed, people and places became a personal, visual, believable record of another human fragment of the extraordinary California Gold Rush. The daguerreotype made it possible for *one person* to preserve a visual record of

Continued on page 71

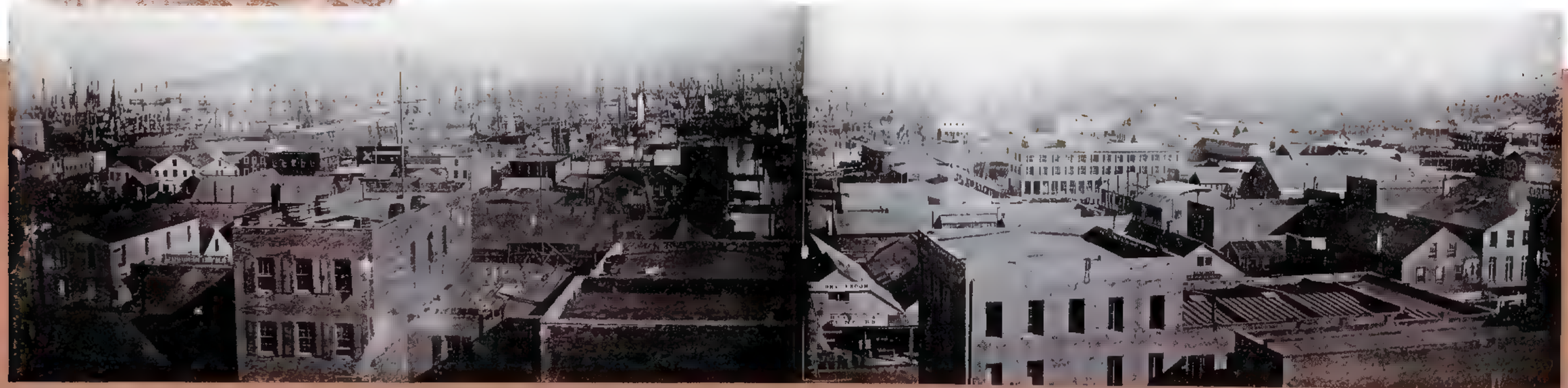
From the sand dunes at First and Howard Streets, 1852: At the left is "Happy Valley," a workers' residential district rapidly filling up with prefabricated cottages shipped in from the East. The high sand dune at the left is approximately on the line of Market Street. At the far right is Rincon Point.

T — Telegraph Hill E — Portsmouth Square O — Oriental Hotel Battery, Bush, and Market Streets)

In San Francisco & The Mines, 1851-1856

BY ROGER OLMSTED
ROBERT A. WEINSTEIN
AND J. S. HOLLIDAY

The "mirror with a memory" documented the epochal event described by some as "the greatest mass movement since the Crusades."



Possibly the first photograph of gold rush San Francisco, this two-part panorama of the "City Front" and the anchorage at Yerba Buena Cove was made sometime in late 1850 or early 1851. "The harbor is crowded with hundreds of old craft which, though condemned before leaving the Atlantic ports, have weathered the storms of Cape Horn. . . . As stores and dwelling houses are much needed, a considerable number of the deserted ships have been . . . fast embedded in deep mud, where they have been converted into warehouses and lodgings for the wants of the crowded population." Two famous ships: the the storeship-hotel **Niantic** (center); the saloon-and-storeship **Apollo** (right).

November 1850 Notwithstanding the conflagrations which have so often laid in ruins large portions of the city or perhaps in consequence of them the buildings in the business quarters are now remarkable for their size beauty and solidity The tents and shanties of last year have totally disappeared from the center of town

But on May 4 1851 the young city was swept by what was known until 1906 as the Great Fire At right are views of either side of Montgomery Street commercial capital of the West before May of '51 Telegraph Hill looms at the end of the street in the upper photo a sand dune blocks the way to Market Street in the lower The Auction Sales Room of Lafitte & Co can be located at the center of the panorama on pages 40 41 The reason that the west landward side of Montgomery looked more remarkable for size beauty and solidity was that it was built up on solid earth rather than the shifting silt of the old shoreline

AUCTIONEER

San Francisco was made of filling in and building up—and it was built on the digging down and tearing out that went on in the streams and dry gulches of the Sierra foothills. Pictured above is just a town, any town; but the two pictures at the right are the two most incisive documents of the golden placers we have yet seen.

Wrote one miner on February 2, 1850: "You can scarcely form any conception of what a dirty business this gold digging is.... A little fat pork, a cup of tea or coffee, and a slice or two of miserable bread form the repast of the miner; a couple of pair of blankets spread upon some rough boards or raw hide form his bed; a pair of coarse boots, a hickory shirt, wool hat, pants, and coat of a peculiar dirt-colored material form his raiment." And a thousand wrote of the ice-cold water that sloughed away their skin and made rheumatic joints in earnest boys.

They turned the rivers and scraped the gold off bedrock. (They also put streams in pipes and washed the hills down through sluice-boxes.) Some won, some lost, and most made wages for grub. One miner-turned-daguerreotypist elegized:

There's "Golden Lake" and "Nelson's Creek" and diggins dry and wet,
And "dams" and "claims" and "ten pound lumps" to coax the green 'uns yet;
There's little hills to mount besides—they're not all dug away!
The Elephant is yet alive, in Californi-a.

That is what it was: there was "elephant" enough for everybody; a touch in any place had the feel of an exotic and important reality.

1851: "In business and in pleasure the San Franciscans were **fast** folk; none were faster in the world. Their rents, interest on money, doings and profits, were all calculated **monthly.** A month with them was considered equal to a year with other people."

April 30, 1851: "The first Baptist Church . . . (although recently much enlarged) being yet too small to accommodate the congregation. . . ." At right the First Baptist, recently enlarged, and scarcely growing fast enough to accommodate the sight of **seven** (7 — count 'em — 7) women!

And as the months that were years piled up, a contemporary historian could write: "Her buildings are becoming palaces, and her merchants, princes. She is fast approaching that peculiar and regal character which in days of old was borne by the great maritime cities of the Mediterranean. . . . Her spirit is **go ahead!**"

Go ahead merchant princes: (left to right, above) Jacob P. Leese, Talbot Green (?), Thomas O. Larkin, Sam Brannan, W. D. M. Howard. Old timers all, founding fathers of the village from six or seven or more years back. Larkin, reputed the richest man in the United States at the time of this shot; Brannan, perhaps yet richer at this instant (1853); Leese, co-producer of the first American child at Yerba Buena in the 1830's (see right); Howard, his thumb in every pie. Green, the mysterious Green, who disappeared when it was said that he had heisted the deposits of a bank Back East. Except for Green, they have a steady gaze and a firm lip.

1854 the city "The distant reader can scarcely have any proper conception of the magnificence of some of these edifices so different from the character of buildings which were constructed in the early years of the great cities of the Atlantic border"

1853 the arts Lola had scarcely appeared on the stage when some of the enthusiastic firemen who filled the Parquette (the Howards and Empires were present in uniform) threw their hats up on the stage She danced with great grace, keeping time with the castanets Upon the falling of the curtain . she appeared holding in her hand one of the firemen's caps filled with bouquets which she had picked up, and made a short address with a slightly foreign accent"

The golden years "I would not for ten thousand dollars have stayed at Madison and lost what I have seen, and although the trip and my life here is not calculated to polish my manners or improve my morals, still I shall take care not to run down hill too far "

A Magic Journey

BY E. L. JACOBS

When I was a small boy I made a journey in a covered wagon, going with my parents from their homestead in Oklahoma Territory to the part of Kansas they had come from, and back again to the homestead. This was not one of those painful and heroic passages through wild-Indian country, across deserts where men died of thirst, over mountain passes where oxen were skinned for rawhide so that dismantled wagons could be lowered down the sheer faces of cliffs; there are no heroics in my saga. Yet I have never, I think, taken a more romantic or exciting trip. As I look back on that long ride in a vehicle now vanished, but then to be seen (in Oklahoma at least) in fair numbers, I remember many things that have stayed with me for the same reasons that would have kept stout Cortez from forgetting what he saw from a peak in Darien.

My father equipped his farm wagon with an "overjut"—a frame placed on top of the wagon box, providing a shelf that extended over the wheels on each side of the wagon, with a vertical board rising from the outer edge of each of these shelves. Wagon bows arched from the side boards, and the canvas cover enclosed a room large enough for beds at night and for some moving about among our traveling gear in the daytime, in case we wished to retreat to the shade and privacy of the interior. But most of the time my sister and I sat on the shelves of the overjut, beside the spring-seat where our parents rode, staying out where we could watch the landscape passing, see the skin wrinkling over the haunches of the horses as they put their muscles into a pull, and spy the ground squirrels or the meadowlarks we startled into motion. There was plenty to see.

And there was time to see it. Few horses walk as fast as four miles per hour. Three miles is much nearer their usual speed. At such a pace the landscape is no succession of brief glimpses. All objects come into sight slowly and are kept in view a long time while the traveler approaches. He cannot only select what he wants to see, but has plenty of time to inspect its surroundings. There was, then, a chance to savor the flat expanse of wild grass waving to the gusts of the prairie wind; or the prairie dogs sitting, at a safe distance, upright on little mounds before their holes, paws on their aldermanic little paunches; or the indistinct object far ahead that slowly took on the shape of two bony mules standing by a fence, chins resting on each other's withers; or the cur with his head and shoulders down in some creature's burrow, his rump elevated while earth and pebbles flew from his clawing forefeet. There was no hurry. One had time to look things over, and, if a thing was worth watching, time to stop.

One spectacle worth our stopping for was the sight of some men breaking a patch of virgin soil, soil that had never felt the outrage of the plowshare and was

putting up a worthy resistance. The ground was fortified by a growth of running-oak, a low, bushy shrub that, according to a farmer, had more wood underground than above the surface. The plow was a sturdy implement with a massive wooden beam, a mouldboard of heavy steel, and a share so thick and strong that it could cut through the roots of the running-oak—if it were supplied with enough power and if the man who held the plow handles had strength to control them. It cut only a narrow furrow, and the roots of oak and wild grass bound the earth so firmly that a man who had strength enough—if any man could ever have had such strength—could pick up the end of the fresh-cut sod and drag away a strip the length of the entire field.

The power for this plowing was furnished by two or three yoke of oxen—my memory is a bit uncertain—chained tandem to the beam of the sod-plow. It was a brave spectacle. I had never seen oxen being worked. Instead of bridles on their heads with bits in their mouths, and long leather lines by means of which the driver would guide them, these animals had no headgear at all. Nor had they any bulky leather collars around their necks, padded against the slope of the shoulders, such as workhorses wore. The near ox of the lead team, a brindled steer with stubs of horns, and his slightly taller fellow on the off side, a bony red animal, had a massive wooden yoke across their shoulders, held in place by wooden bows coming up on both sides of their necks and fastened through holes bored in the yoke. A chain ran from a ring in the center of this yoke back to the plow; I could not see whether it was attached to the yoke of the following oxen, or whether they had separate chains.

The shouting of the men, the cracking of the blacksnake whip, the deliberate, ponderous heaving of the beasts against their yokes, the forward lurching of the plow with the strip of cut sod curling off the mouldboard to stand on edge against the strip turned up on the previous round—it all gave me a sense of being present at some kind of creation. Half a dozen dogs ranged about, fought, chased rabbits, and made themselves a part of the excitement.

Another thing to stop for was the unhappy Negro with a wagonload of wood stalled in deep sand at the foot of a hill somewhere east of Guthrie. He had three yoke of scrawny Jersey steers, sun-faded little fawn-colored creatures, with a runty, starved-looking brown mule hitched in front of them; but his wheels had settled down in the sand, and the beasts either did not pull well together or were simply too weak to move the load, no matter how loud the old man yelled or how plaintively his adolescent son whined at them. The narrow iron tires of a loaded wagon will sink perhaps half a felloe's depth in dry sand, and, as they turn, a little stream of sand will dribble from the rims, much as water runs from a wheel moving through a ford. But these wheels were not turning. Wearily, father and son were unloading a few sticks of wood and piling them by the road, trying to get a concerted effort out of the mule and the little steers, unloading a few more sticks, and trying again.

Some man who came by asked the boy, "Did you try swearin' at them steers?"

"No, suh," the boy said. "I wanted to, but Pappy wouldn't let me." He added in mournful disgust, "You cain't drive steers without swearin' at 'em."

There was a great deal to see. And there were things to hear above the chuckling of the wagon wheels and the creaking of the harness. The wind made a rattling among the sharp-edged leaves of a big cottonwood that leaned over the road. The meadowlarks springing up from the prairie grass uttered their quick succession of notes, always sounding startled. Wooden bridge floors rumbled under the iron tires, and the waters of a ford added to their splashing the muffled thump of wheels on hidden stones. The raucous voices of crows came from a little crowd circling above a strip of timber by a small creek, and from one member that flew near enough to show where a missing feather left a gap in his flapping wing. A sudden shower drummed on the canvas cover with a hollow sound like nothing else in my experience.

Our covered wagon was not a sight to attract curious attention. Oklahoma was "new country," and many wagons on the road were covered like our own. Others, loaded with household goods and with children, had their bare, weathered bows without the canvas—perhaps some storm had torn away the cover. Some outfits had an extra horse or two, tied either behind the wagon or to the hames of the working horses. Children would peer at us from the opening in the back of their wagon cover, where the rope drawstring left a peephole. Usually they were grimy-looking children. Their fathers, when we saw them, had beards ranging from the stubble of a week's growth to the impressive valance that hid the shirt-front. The mothers would sometimes be sitting on

Continued on page 75

THE HARD LUCK STORY OF THE SNIVELY EXPEDITION

BY STEPHEN B. OATES

TEXAS ENTERED 1840, her fourth year of nationhood, plagued with instabilities. Not only was her government rife with dissension, but her treasury was empty, her commerce erratic, and her money as worthless as that of hated Mexico. Beset with such internal troubles, Texas turned away from herself, looked more and more toward the West—that symbol of man's most lavish dreams for over three centuries now—for solutions to her national difficulties. In the Texas Congress, expansionists talked of conquering eastern New Mexico, which Texans claimed anyway, thereby getting control of the lucrative trade Santa Fe Trail. More ambitious expansionists clamored for even larger stakes: why not forge a mighty continental empire that would rival the United States, thus avenging the snub of the 1836 rejection of annexation? What these men envisioned was a Greater Texas that would include all of New Mexico, California, and several other Mexican provinces, the conquest of which would give the Republic outlets on two oceans and bring into her treasuries wealth beyond dreams. The expansionists swept aside all arguments that Mexico had legal title to these lands. Protestant Texas, they declared, had a God-given right to wrest from Catholic Mexico all the territory she wanted, both for her own democratic experiment and for the Anglo-Saxon race. The fact that Mexico refused to recognize Texas independence argued that a state of war still existed between them, and was all the excuse Texans needed to put their talk of territorial conquest into action.

Texas made her first move in 1841, when President Mirabeau B. Lamar sent out an expedition to seize Santa Fe and eastern New Mexico. But the adventure ended in disaster when a Mexican army soundly whipped the Texans and marched them under guard all the way to Mexico City. Texas was outraged. In retaliation its congress "annexed" New Mexico, California, and all or portions of seven other Mexican provinces. But the new president, that "Damn old drunk Cherokee" Sam Houston, vetoed the resolution, remarking acidly that this was no time for a "legislative jest." Then Mexico launched two raids against San Antonio, the sheer audacity of which made the Texans' blood boil. When a retaliatory expedition surrendered in disgrace at Mier (in northern Mexico), the entire Republic howled for

revenge. Houston resorted to grandiloquent tough talk, warning Mexico that if she pushed him too far, "the Texas standard of the single star, borne by the Anglo-Saxon race, shall display its bright folds in liberty's triumph on the Isthmus of Darien." But all this got him was criticism from people who were in no mood for mere talk.

The President himself was ready to start acting, perhaps with a series of bold strikes toward the west, when his adjutant and inspector general, a German named Jacob Snively, approached him with a plan. Why not, Snively suggested, retaliate with a raid on Mexican caravans rumbling over the Santa Fe Trail in northern Texas? Would this not result in much booty for Houston's nearly destitute government? Would it not sate the general cry for blood that had risen since the Mier debacle, and do much to restore the general's reputation in the eyes of the Republic? Furthermore, if the expedition proved at all successful, might it not push on and capture Santa Fe—as Lamar had wanted to do two years before—and give Texas control of all of eastern New Mexico?

Houston was most impressed with this tall, bold German. He liked to fight, and had a distinguished record: a veteran of the Texas Revolution, paymaster general, secretary of war, adjutant and inspector general now. The President wasted little time in approving the expedition. On February 16, 1843, he gave Snively a colonel's commission and ordered him to "organize and fit out an expedition for the purpose of intercepting and capturing the property of Mexican traders who may pass through the territory of the Republic." The territory Houston had in mind was the entire western portion of the Republic, which included parts of the present-day states of Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado, and Wyoming, as well as eastern New Mexico. Snively and his raiders were to keep half of whatever they could seize in this area; the other half would inure to the government. Though Snively's Santa Fe Expedition was to be mainly one of reprisal, it might well open the way for a larger westward thrust later on—one that would start Texas on her much-heralded march toward the Pacific and her greater destiny as a continental power.

While Houston contemplated the long range objectives of the expedition, Snively chose a place of rendezvous—Fort Johnson, located at the little settlement of Georgetown, near Coffee's Bend on Red River—and then canvassed "the most thickly settled portions of the republic" enlisting recruits and gathering supplies. By mid-April, some one hundred and seventy-five volunteers, carrying their own weapons and riding their own horses, had arrived at Fort Johnson. Most of them were young, many were unmarried, and all were edgy, tired of working, and eager to make some quick money and shoot a few Mexicans. There was Hugh Franklin Young, an ex-buffalo hunter, restless, "straight as an Indian," and as fond of fancy clothes—frock coats and silk hats—as he was of brawling. There was Eli Chandler, a trouble maker, who went about with a mind alert to plots. There was young Steward A. Miller, philosophic, loquacious, a compulsive diary writer destined to become the historian of the expedition. Other recruits were hardly more than boys—raw as fence posts and ready to prove their manhood at the drop of an insult. Steward Miller, surveying the lot, noted that "They are furnished generally with a rifle, breace of pistols, & Bowie Knife. . . . That such men thus accutred, equiped, and determined should effect the object of their tour is almost beyond doubt."

Sam Houston

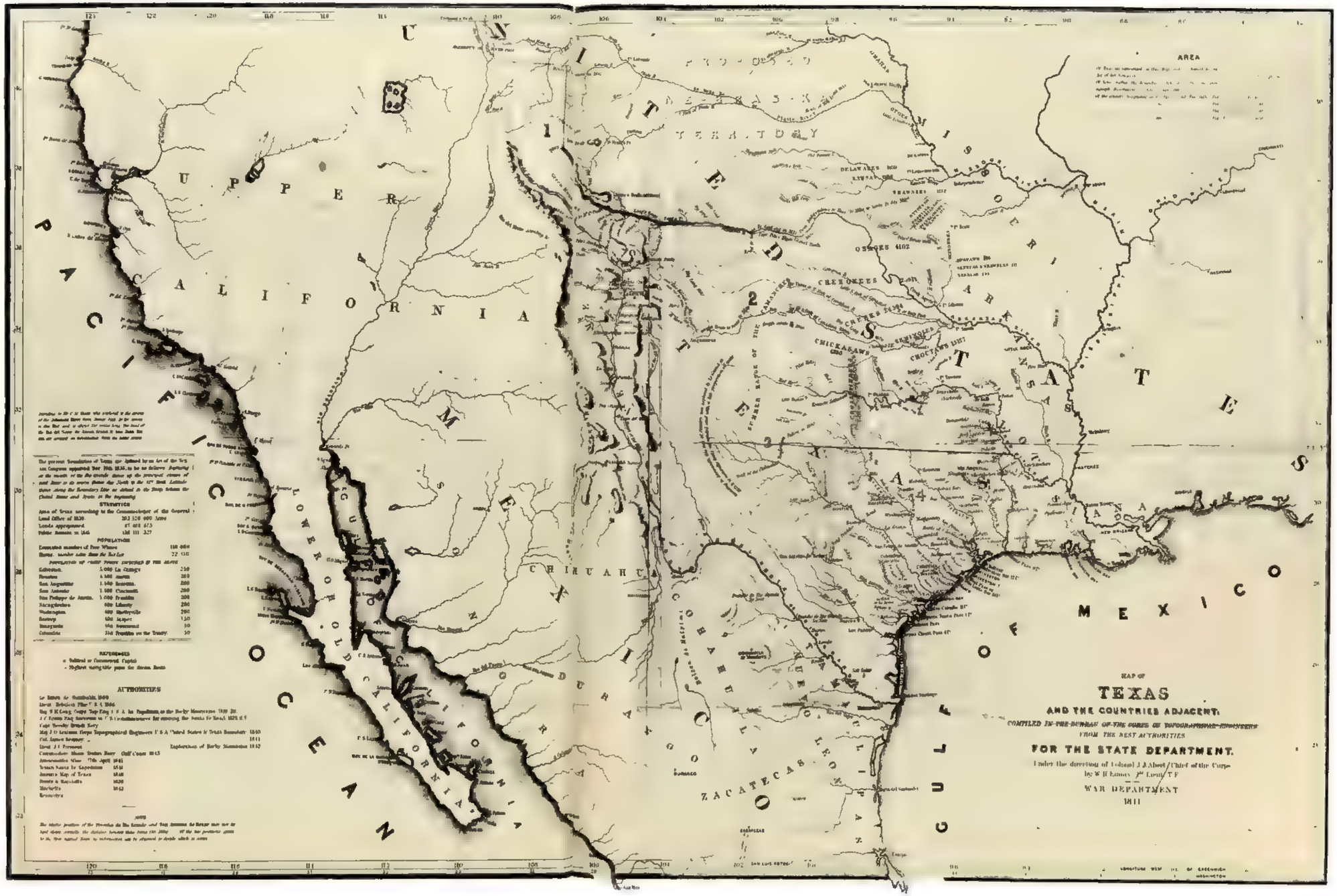
On April 24, Snively organized his men into three companies and had them choose a name for the entire outfit—"The Battalion of Invincibles." Then, after they had elected him commander of the expedition, he gave a victory speech that moved everybody but Chandler to hurrahs. The next day Commander Snively ran his men through a brisk mounted drill on the parade grounds, pronounced them ready to ride, and led them out of Fort Johnson at a jingling trot.

The column followed the Chihuahua Trail for a few days, then forded the Little Wichita and moved up the North Fork of Red River. On the other side of the river lay rolling brush country that belonged to the United States. Snively had explicit orders not to transgress on U.S. territory, and he and his guide, James O. Rice, made painstaking efforts to follow these orders to the letter.

On May 5 the Texans crossed Red River, then struck out to the northwest, passing the Wichita Mountains some five days later. The land was now a flat prairie sloping away from the mountains, crowded with thick mesquite grass; in the distance they could see a herd of grazing buffalo. "What a field for the painter of rich scenery!" Miller wrote in the saddle, but wood for campfires was scarce and the nights were cold and miserable

Texas was mapped by the United States War Department in 1844, a year after the Snively Expedition fumbled after glory and gold on the Santa Fe Trail (marked near the top center of the map as, "Road to Santa Fe laid out in 1825"). That the imperial designs of Texas were somewhat paranoid in concept (as well as execution) can be seen by a very close look at the map's legend. The Republic of Texas was populated at this time by about 140, 000 "free whites" (which may or may not have included free Mexicans), the largest of her "Chief Towns" was Galveston (5,000), and the national capital of Austin held two hundred souls—a figure that presumably increased during sessions of the Texian Congress.

Arrows indicate the general route of the Snively expedition.



As the raiders pushed on, fording the Washita and Canadian rivers and heading due north, their horses began to get sore backs and split hooves. The column rested a day or two on the north bank of the Cimarron, in a country scarcely better known than in Coronado's day. By May 25 the raiders were moving again, this time over a plain devoid of grass and water. As the wind howled out of the southwest, stirring up clouds of dust and sand that chapped their faces and parched their throats, the raiders lost what little enthusiasm they had left. "We are now at from 500 to 1,000 miles from our respective homes," Miller noted gloomily, "with but a scanty supply of provisions, in want of a proper knowledge of the country we are in, or of the distance to the place of our destination"—the Arkansas River, where the Santa Fe Trail made its crossing. "Some of us sick & borne on litters," Miller went on. "Others a foot for the want of horses, which have been lost, died, or jaded with fatigue. All suffering for want of water & one of our number having been killed, or captured by the savages" who followed the column like vultures, waiting at night for a chance to steal a horse or knife a sleeping sentinel. On May 27 the raiders sighted the Arkansas River winding lazily through a flat, windswept valley. "The whole command rushed forward," Hugh Young recalled, "and gave a genuine yell before plunging into the cooling waters of the beautiful river."

While the men yelled and splashed about in the water, Snively sent a scout across the river to "ascertain the condition of things" on the nearby Santa Fe Trail. The scout traveled back and forth across the trail, then reported that although he had seen fresh wagon tracks and hoof prints, there was no other sign of Mexican trains. When Snively announced this to the men, they were bitterly disappointed; to have shot up a big Mexican caravan and taken a lot of booty would have made this a perfect day indeed. But at that moment another scout reported sighting a number of wagons near the river, perhaps a mile away. Were they Mexican? A rich train from Santa Fe? Closer inspection revealed them to be a party of Americans from Bent's Fort, a trading post on the north bank of the Arkansas in present-day Colorado, and the Texans were disappointed a second time. Colonel Snively spoke with the leader of the party, one of the Bent brothers, who thought that a Mexican caravan was now in Fort Leavenworth and would be along in eighteen or twenty days.

This new report left the men even more dejected than before. They were in no mood to sit on their haunches and wait twenty days for all that Mexican wealth to come to them. Why couldn't they cross the river, ride toward Fort Leavenworth, and intercept the train? But Snively would have none of that: his orders were to stay west of the 100th meridian, inside Texas territory, and like it or not that was what they were going to do. While the men grumbled and glared at him, Snively moved them all downstream to a grove of trees on Crooked Creek, where they pitched camp. He had picked a good spot, for the raiders were now in a position to command the Cimarron branch of the Santa Fe Trail and to screen their own movements in the area.

A week of inactivity passed. With nothing to do, the men grew more restless and discontented than ever, thanks in part to Eli Chandler, who moved among them spreading dissatisfaction with Colonel Snively. But then, on June 7, the lookouts thought they saw something and the entire command rushed forward. But when they reached the Arkansas the trail was empty. The men fumed, and Chandler blamed all their troubles on Snively.

The colonel quieted dissension, at least for the moment, and took his unhappy band into wide-open country above the point where the Cimarron branch of the trail crossed the Arkansas. Here they kept a constant watch on the horizon for signs of dust that would signal the approach of the train. Then one of the sentinels spotted something: three figures out on the prairie, and coming this way—perhaps scouts for the Mexican wagons. But not so; they were Americans. As they came into camp and the raiders gathered around, the leader introduced himself as Charles A. Warfield from Louisiana. He and his two companions had heard that Snively was out here to raid Mexican trains under authority of the Texas government. Could the Colonel use three more good men? Snively, who may have heard something from Bent's party about Warfield and the sacking of some New Mexico town, seems to have questioned all three men at some length. Finally, satisfying himself they were all right, he let them join the command.

More days of inaction and more false alarms followed. With Chandler still spreading disaffection, the men might have mutinied had not their fortunes—like the prairie wind—changed again. On June 20, as they were falling back to Crooked Creek, they sighted a body of mounted men, outlined against the sky. A patrol rode out to investigate, then came galloping back yelling

"Mexicans! Mexicans!" In an ecstasy of nervous excitement, the raiders fell out of line and into battle formation, charging forward with all the organization of stampeding cattle. Frightened out of their wits, the Mexicans took cover in a nearby ravine. But the Texans were coming down upon them so fast, shooting so recklessly and making such an ungodly racket, that the Mexicans threw down their weapons, raised their hands, and begged to be taken prisoner. Though eighteen Mexicans had already been killed and as many others wounded, the Texans had just begun to fight. They were in no mood to take prisoners. As the Mexicans—some sixty-two of them—stared wild-eyed at the muzzles of the Texans' guns, Colonel Snively intervened. There would be no murdering of prisoners as long as he was commander of this expedition. This must have given his disgruntled troops something more to think about as they jabbed the Mexicans into line and herded them off to camp.

Even if Snively had shown himself a "timid, overcautious man" (as Chandler described him), this encounter nevertheless gave the raiders renewed hope: if Mexican troops were in the area, the rich Mexican caravan must also be nearby. It was too near sundown to go after it now, but tomorrow—tomorrow they would surely overrun it and capture . . . would it be ten thousand dollars worth of silks, spices, jewelry—even gold? Whatever it was to be, it was something they could all sleep on that night.

But they were not to sleep for long. About midnight a mob of Arapahos surrounded the camp and came in "yelling infernally," throwing the whole command into a panic. But no sooner had the "attack" begun than it stopped. The Indians simply wanted to talk. "We were recognized as friends," Young said. "Luckily we had a full supply of buffalo meat, and were enabled to feast our red brothers in a manner they esteemed sumptuous." The Indians finally departed, to the great relief of the raiders, who lay awake for the rest of the night with guns loaded and eyes on moving shadows.

All during the next week the Texans searched in vain for the promised caravan. All they found was another band of Indians—Comanches this time—who stalked the column like wolves, ambushing patrols and stragglers, and on one night suddenly burst into the Texans' camp "with a big hullabaloo," stole some horses, and speared one of the pickets. Miraculously, the man lived, but after that nobody could sleep.

If the nights were bad, the days were even worse: the column wandered aimlessly up and down the river, only to fall back to Crooked Creek again. There, to add insult to misery, Colonel Snively had the gall to turn their Mexican prisoners loose. Not only did he turn them loose—he gave them mules, guns, and precious provisions. Was Chandler right, then? Was the commander a traitor?

Aware that his men were on the verge of mutiny, Snively sent Warfield over to the United States side of the river, to find out once and for all what had happened to the Mexican train. Warfield came back with the most discouraging news the Texans had heard yet: somehow he had come to the conclusion that the Mexican caravan had either gone back to Fort Leavenworth, or had moved up the Pawnee Fork of the trail and would cross the Arkansas higher up, out of the Texans' reach. "This report created excitement and despondence," Young said. "We afterwards had reason to believe it false."

False or not, some seventy-six of the raiders had had enough. Announcing that they were going home, they elected Chandler their commander (a move that Young and Miller, who had remained loyal to Snively, viewed with suspicion) and stalked out of camp. Watching them go, most of the others agreed that if the train did not come along in a few days, they too would leave. Only ten men told Snively they would stay regardless of what happened, but even the commander was losing hope now. He said they had better start hunting buffalo; the return march would be miserable in any case, and worse if they had nothing to eat.

On June 29, with hunting parties scouring the area, the Texans made camp at a spot (now Ferguson Grove) on the Arkansas River, some fifty miles west of the 100th meridian, or about the same distance inside Texas territory as recognized by both the United States and the Texas Republic. At nine o'clock the next morning, as the men were cleaning up after breakfast, they saw one of their hunters running toward the river, his arms flailing. The Texans could scarcely believe their eyes: following the hunter was a column of about two hundred United States Dragoons with two cannon. The Dragoons stopped a few hundred yards across the river from where the raiders stood, and prepared to make camp. At that moment, the long-awaited Mexican caravan—seventy-five succulent, bulging wagons—came clattering over the trail, and passed in back of the United States troops.

The Texans gaped incredulously, too stunned even to curse. All at once the Americans raised a white flag. Colonel Snively, as shocked as his men, raised a white flag in return. In a moment two messengers splashed across the river. Directed to Colonel Snively, they announced that their own commander, Captain Philip St. George Cooke, wished to see the Colonel in Cooke's tent; would the Colonel come peacefully? He would, Snively replied, if Captain Cooke would acknowledge that this was Texas soil and would let him return without harm. "To both of these questions," Miller scribbled in his diary, "the messenger agreed." Snively then mounted and crossed over to the United States camp. Two hours passed. As the Texans watched intently, "wondering what it all meant," Snively emerged from Cooke's tent, mounted his horse, and headed back to the ford. But Captain Cooke called him back. There was a bustle in the American camp: the Dragoons saddled up, and Captain Cooke led them, along with Snively and his escort, across the river and beyond a belt of timber to the edge of the prairie. Here the Dragoons deployed with blood-chilling precision. In a moment the Texans were invested on three sides. The Dragoons cocked their guns. Across the river the cannon were rolled into position, and the gunners lit their matches. It was going to be a massacre.

The raiders crowded together like trapped animals. But the Dragoons did not fire. Slowly, Colonel Snively rode back to the Texan camp. He announced that Captain Cooke had given them exactly thirty minutes to surrender unconditionally or be shot. There was a long silence. Then a few of the men protested: what right did Cooke have to order such a thing? The Texans were in their own territory, had broken no laws, violated no treaties, killed no Americans, stolen no property—until a few hours ago they had not even *seen* any property—so how, by what human or legal right, could Captain Cooke demand their surrender? Could the Colonel not try to reason with the madman? Colonel Snively rode out, but came back in a few minutes and said it was no use. A couple of belligerents were ready to fight it out, but the others, eyeing the cannon, lost heart. Stacking their muskets (but concealing a few knives and pistols beneath their clothes), they surrendered.

More humiliation was to come. When Snively pleaded with Cooke to let the Texans keep guns enough to defend themselves, pointing out that there were hostile Indians all along their return route, "the generous officer," Young recorded sarcastically, "permitted us to retain ten guns, with ten rounds of ammunition to each gun," and told them to leave the area at once. Cooke then led his troops back across the river. The Texans were so crushed they could scarcely look at each other. True, "it was humiliating," Young wrote. But outmanned, outgunned, and outmaneuvered as they were, what else could they do?

With their ten guns, plus the pistols and knives they had concealed, the raiders moved to Elm Creek the next morning, harboring more hatred for Cooke than they had felt even for Santa Anna.

Their commander might well have felt the same way. Perhaps he even agreed with some of his men that "the dastard Cooke" had been bribed by the Mexicans to disarm the Texan force. Of course, it was possible that the captain had made a mistake, thinking he was still in United States territory when he confronted the raiders. But what bothered Snively—and would bother many other Texans for years—was how Cooke could have marched fifty miles west of the 100th meridian and believed he was still on U.S. soil. His maps and guides could not have been *that* inaccurate, could they?

Another thing: why had the United States sent Cooke out to protect the Mexican train and to disperse the Snively column in the first place? Doubtless, Cooke had told Snively what his orders were: to dispell any Texas land pirates he found operating on the western end of the Santa Fe Trail. He had not, however, explained why such orders had been issued and why he and his government regarded Snively's column as a band of land pirates.

What Snively could not know was that the United States had suffered considerable national embarrassment because of two other raiding groups that had insisted that they, too, were operating under full authority of the Texas government. The first of these had been led by none other than Charles A. Warfield—the same Warfield who had joined Snively and his men sometime between June 7 and June 20. Warfield had been authorized by President Houston to raid Mexican trains crossing Texas-claimed territory on the Santa Fe Trail some six months before Snively, and had led a band of twenty-four men up to the Arkansas River, near the junction of the Rio de las Animas. Warfield had apparently cared nothing for boundaries or legalities, roaming U.S. terri-

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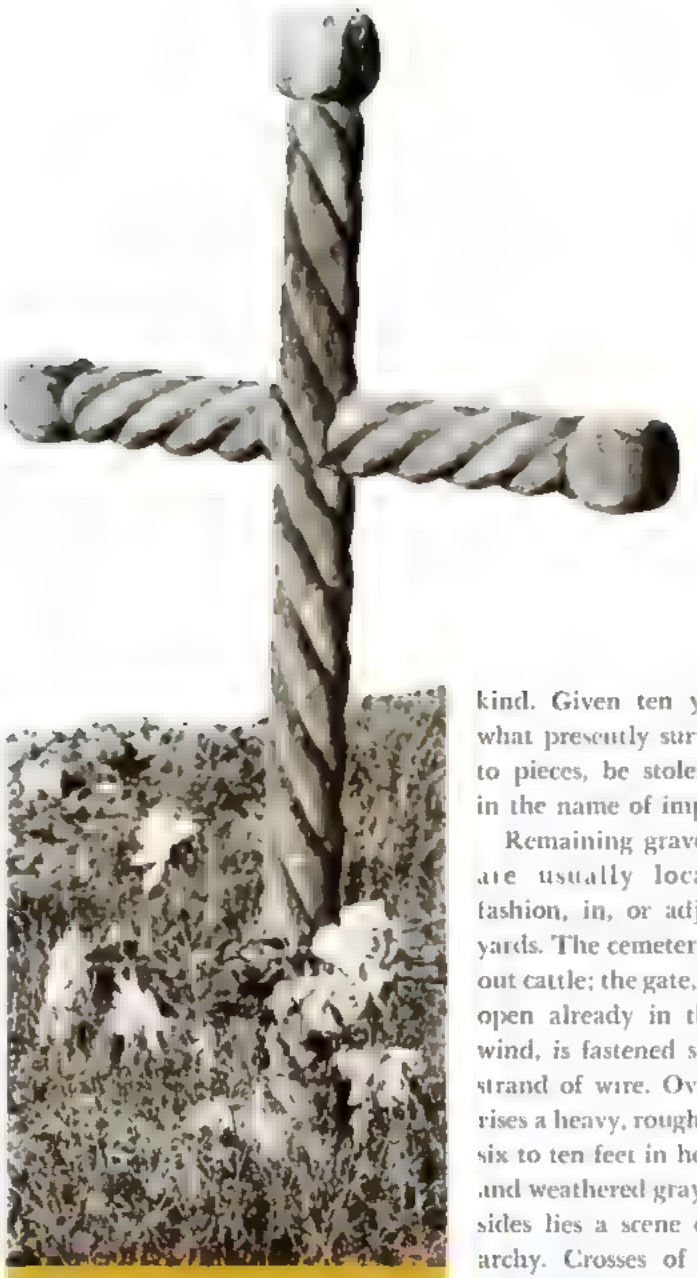


MARKERS CUT BY HAND

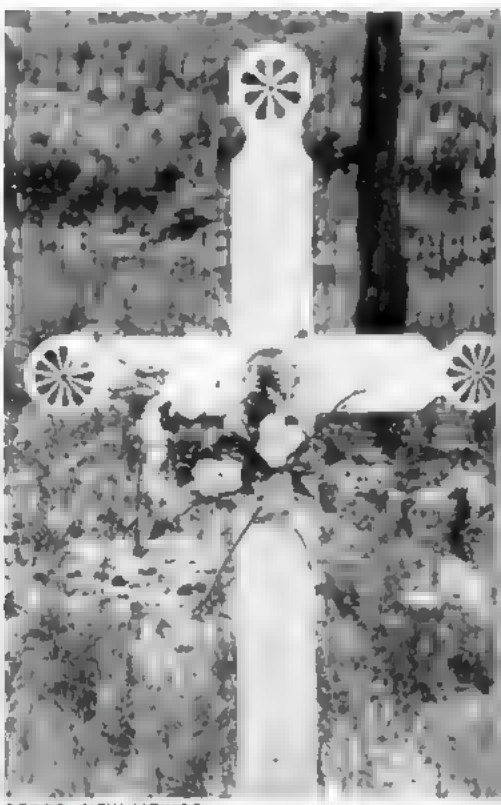
BY ROBERT H. ADAMS

AMONG THE RICHEST of the folk arts once common in the Spanish Southwest was that of the carpenters and stonecutters who, in extra time, fashioned monuments over the graves of neighbors and family. Their craft is today almost gone from the district in which it has been prominent for over a century: the area running from Taos to Santa Fe. Where there were complexities of brilliantly white wooden and stone forms, there are now only barren rows of simple crosses, or machine-lettered and -polished marble stones adopted from the Anglo community. These, to add irony, are padlocked away, as the old markers never were, to keep out those who may recall the past and stop to wonder. Only in a half dozen remote New Mexican and southern Colorado communities are there still major cemeteries of the traditional kind. Given ten years, most agree, what presently survives will weather to pieces, be stolen, or be replaced in the name of improvement.

Remaining graves of the old style are usually located, European fashion, in, or adjacent to, church yards. The cemetery is fenced to keep out cattle; the gate, if it has not blown open already in the face of winter wind, is fastened simply by a rusted strand of wire. Over the whole area rises a heavy, rough-cut wooden cross, six to ten feet in height, undecorated and weathered gray. Beneath it on all sides lies a scene of remarkable anarchy. Crosses of numerous shapes and heights jut up, some tilting at extreme angles, many half hidden by a snarled, knee-high growth of sage, rabbitbush, and tumbleweed. Because the ground is rocky, the graves are shallow; dirt and stones are customarily piled as much as two feet high over them. Several graves will stand virtually open, the wooden casket having collapsed. Around

AMALIA, NEW MEXICO

AMALIA, NEW MEXICO



CERRO NEW MEXICO

many, however, there is a protective fence, usually of wood.

Wired to the crosses themselves is now often an array of plastic flowers, foam wreaths in aluminum foil, and the like. If one can see beneath these obstacles, there is a rich Hebraic-Christian iconography to be found: the cross in its many forms, doves, sheep, angels, the tree of life, and the human heart. In many instances, the symbols have been used with astonishing freshness. Untutored and impelled by intense religious conviction (particularly so in the case of the Penitentes, the gnostic religious order next to whose *moradas*, or meeting houses, stand a good many graves), the amateur artists have achieved statements of faith far stronger than those of most professionals.

Who created a particular marker is not easily determined unless someone still living in the village remembers. Most people apparently made only those crosses required for relatives. In a few cases, judging by the inscription, a man cut his own. In other rare instances, an individual with special skill was called upon by several families. For example, the same stonecutter has made nearly a dozen monuments of widely different shapes and sizes at La Garita. Similarly at Amalia one suspects that a single man did most of the intricate woodworking.

Choice of materials was governed by the craftsman's skills, local availability, and a degree of fashion. By far the most widely used has been wood, chiefly pine. Until recently, it was shaped with the simplest tools: a straight or coping saw, a brace and bit, a knife, and a chisel. Sections of a cross were then assembled, using nails and wooden pegs. When finished, the cross was painted, custom-

AMALIA, NEW MEXICO

arily white, though sometimes green; trim was added in green, red, yellow, brown, or black, with wording almost always done in the latter. But winter cold and snow, alternating with the summer's dry heat, soon stripped the wood bare again. This has not, however, meant axiomatically that the lettering and ornamentation have been lost; this is so because the decorative paint, in effect a second coat, protected the wood beneath it longer and caused it eventually to stand higher than the wood that was exposed and weathered earlier.

Stone has never been as widely employed as wood. When it was used, the variety was almost always the same—sandstone. Locally obtainable and easily broken into thin sheets, it was soft enough to be inscribed with a simple chisel or spike.

Though stone markers were usually just one piece, the mason at La Garita cut his sandstone especially thick and was thereby able to build relatively tall monuments of as many as three pieces, relying on simple though precisely chiseled sockets to hold the sections together. They stand today, inscribed with a unique calligraphy, as some of the most remarkable extant pieces of the art.

Memorials of cast cement were made at least as far back as the 1890s, and continue to be made today. Though the technique sounds unpromising, especially in view of the final coat of pastel paint often applied, the results are frequently winning. Strong designs with considerable detail can be worked easily in the wet cement by people who could not do so in stone. Moreover, the medium is not, as one might fear, especially fragile; most craftsmen

SANDSTONE MARKER, LA GARITA, COLORADO

CEMETERY AT LA GARITA, COLORADO

LAS TRAMPAS, NEW MEXICO

CONCRETE MARKER, AMALIA, NEW MEXICO

CHURCHYARD AT LLANO, NEW MEXICO

CEMETERY AT PETACA, NEW MEXICO

have learned to reinforce their products with baling wire or scrap iron.

The only other material employed for whole monuments is metal. At worst, this has meant the use, customarily for fences, of imported castings. At best, the iron is bent by local smiths into pleasing, curved designs not unlike the work of European craftsmen in past centuries.

It is probably futile to hope—though one involuntarily does—that all this will last. Local woodworking is now limited to pockets accidentally undisturbed by real estate developers and highway planners. The cemetery at Antonito, Colorado, a center of Spanish-American culture, is indicative of what has happened. Each spring, acres where there were once hundreds of wooden crosses are *burned* off in order to rid new stone monuments of weeds. In the few developed areas where wood is still used, most of the craftsmen now employ electric saws and routing machines to turn out markers in the style of "rustic," highly varnished U.S. Forest Service signs. Stone, as far as I have been able to discover, has not been locally crafted for over thirty years. And cement memorials, lacking the gloss of marble, are increasingly hard to find.

MONTE VISTA, COLORADO

What now stands, then, is about all there is likely to be. But it is subject to unmerciful extremes of weather. And upkeep is almost nonexistent. One bent old man in Amalia told me, while he cut hay, of a priest from Costilla who had begged him to organize residents to care for the graves. "Two other old men came and we worked three days. Then we stopped. No one cares." If enough examples of the craft could, by miracle, be saved, many would care. Rarely has an art, built of such relatively transient material, testified so strongly to a belief in what is lasting. [ ]

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

David Lavender was born in Telluride, Colorado, one of the many boom towns of that state's mining frontier. He has written numerous western books, two of the most recent of which are *The American Heritage Book of the Great West* (1965) and *Climax at Buena Vista: The American Campaigns in Northeastern Mexico, 1846–47* (1966). He is currently finishing a book on the Rocky Mountains for Harper & Row's *Regions of America* series.

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Robert H. Adams, of Colorado College, is both an English teacher and a professional photographer and free-lance writer. He is presently completing a photographic essay on early prairie churches.

Alec Swan *continued from page 24*

enterprises of nearly everybody else—and despite some low rumblings in faraway Scotland, his credit at home was as unlimited and his prestige as overwhelming as ever.

Now came early spring, and prominent cattlemen, relaxing in the warmth of the Cheyenne Club, were paying no heed to silly rumors about thousands and thousands of cattle lying dead in the frozen wastes. And Alec Swan, who of them all might have been expected to think twice, was equally unconcerned. He was off to Edinburgh and London, to attend the annual meeting of the Swan Land and Cattle Company and also, it was said, to float another giant cattle corporation.

And now a very minor matter, a matter so trifling as to have passed almost unnoticed in the pressure of Swan's great affairs, raised its head. Some time earlier Swan had endorsed a $25,000 note for one T. L. Dirnie or Drimmie of Davenport, Iowa, who has long since passed into limbo. It was a routine transaction of the sort in which Alec Swan was constantly engaged, since he had any number of friends who were always calling on him for favors, including the old Iowa associates with whom he had always kept contact. The note fell due; Mr. Dirnie, or Drimmie, defaulted on the payment, and the German Savings Bank of Davenport, which held the paper, turned to Mr. Swan for payment. But the magnate, hurrying to get off to Europe, either overlooked the matter or thought it could wait. At any rate, he sailed without attending to it.

In due course the bank in Davenport began attaching the property of Swan Brothers, a subsidiary.

By this time the American cattle king was on his usual triumphal progress through the highest financial circles of Great Britain, and any rumblings of discontent in his board of directors were lost in the impact of his glamour and prestige. Then a friend cabled him that the attachment was underway. Swan himself said later that he had had no notice of any action contemplated against him until he received the cable. He may not have known of the contemplated action; but a slightly different version holds that the German Savings Bank definitely did notify Swan of the default while he was still in Cheyenne; that it sent an emissary to arrange for payment but that Swan broke the appointment; that he subsequently broke a second appointment; that he was notified a third time just as he was about to sail, but ignored that notice also. All this has a fearful ring of plausibility because it is so clearly in character: Swan, hurrying and overconfident as always, full of great concerns, brushing off this trifle of a $25,000 endorsement with the intention of taking it up later.

The Swan Brothers, operating in Iowa, and by now consisting only of Alexander and Thomas, was immediately affected. The German bank's action caused a run on the firm; creditors "not advised of the real facts," according to Swan's still loyal supporters, became alarmed and many claims were presented that were not yet due. The sum of $85,000 was paid out in a few days and then—suspension. Meanwhile, at about the time Swan received his friend's cable advising him of the proceedings against him, another person, not a friend, also cabled the news to Scotland and it was given to the press. From that moment he was a ruined man.

At the clubs and offices where the wonder-working American had been hailed almost like royalty, smiles froze and handshakes went limp. He hurried home to try to redeem himself—though "hurry" was a relative word in that day of slow transatlantic liners and leisurely transcontinental trains—only to find more creditors pouring in on him. His reputation was gone, his credit wiped out.

On Monday, May 16, it became known via the Cheyenne press, in the smallest possible type, that late on the previous Saturday Swan Brothers, "the well-known firm of livestock dealers," had made an assignment of all property for the benefit of creditors. It couldn't be true, but it was. The great Alec Swan was in bankruptcy.

The earthquake that rocked Cheyenne sent its seismic tremors throughout the cattle kingdom, from the banks of Chicago to those of Europe. Cheyenne's hotels were crowded with worried investors who came flocking into town, but they could do nothing to help themselves. There was a great deal of righteous finger-pointing with jeers about "mismanagement," "reckless operations," and the like; in Clay's words, "when the crash came the worshippers slipped away, saying under their breath, 'I told you so. Poor Alec was no business man.' " Much of this came under the head of the pot calling the kettle black. Most of the big operators in the western cattle industry were guilty of the same faults of management—

overstocking, book count deals, and wild promotions; the industry as a whole was in very much the same rickety state as Swan's enterprises had been. His inverted pyramid of debt and promotion may have been even grander and more insecure; but on the whole he was not too much worse than many of the rest of them; he was only bigger.

At the same time there was a great deal of whistling in the dark to the effect that the Swan Land and Cattle Company was itself not involved. Said the press: "The cattle interests are in a flourishing condition." They were scarcely flourishing, but the Two Bar went on operating more or less as usual, and so, up to a point, did the company.

Not so Swan himself. Around June 23 a receiver was appointed for Swan Brothers, and before the end of the month Alec Swan was dismissed as manager of the Swan Land and Cattle Company. On July 15 more news broke: Alexander H. Swan and Associates, to the number of fifteen, were being sued by the Swan Land and Cattle Company for $800,000 in the United States District Court in Chicago. "The Scotchmen Claim They Were Swindled in Original Purchases. An Alleged Shortage in the Book Account of Cattle," ran the *Cheyenne Leader* headline. Only 60,000 cattle had been found on the recent roundup instead of the expected 89,000, a shortage compounded by a huge drop in the expected number of calves. The figures were certainly explainable in part by the appalling losses of the winter just passed, but wrathful Scottish directors, who had never seen a Wyoming blizzard, were in no mood to accept such a ridiculous excuse as the weather. Eventually, however, the suit was dismissed.

It was only a matter of months after Swan's downfall when the Grim Reaper, who had taken such a terrible toll of the cattle in those months of white hell, presented his bill to the owners also. By now, cattle companies were falling right and left, but these victims were not in the same boat as Alec Swan. They all failed together; they could cling to one another and to the comforting mutual assurance that *they* were not at fault; they were merely the victims of an unprecedented natural catastrophe; as for the loner Alex Swan—who had gone his own imperious way in spite of them—*he* was cast into outer darkness.

And so the Beef Bonanza came to an end, and Wyoming entered a new phase of its history. The "lords," as the cowboys called them—the young men with English accents and ample means who had "managed" large cattle companies, often to the detriment of the latter; who had attended white tie dinners at the Cheyenne Club and gone on gay hunting parties in the fall after moose and elk—these gilded imports shrugged off the disaster as merely one of those things, and returned to their normal pursuits, such as riding to hounds and swimming in the Mediterranean. The rich young Americans went back to Wall Street.

But Alec Swan had nothing except what he had built himself, and when that went he went also. Swan is said to have felt that enemies were at the bottom of the attacks on his credit, and this may well have been so. But if he had enemies, he also held the loyalty of stricken subordinates who stood by him to the bitter end, who even tried to throw their own money into the breach. But the breach was too wide. This stubborn devotion to a man who had earned it from his men, whatever his faults in other areas, prevailed on every level, from the executive office to the cow camp, and proved to be something of an embarrassment to those who took over the reins of management, since they made no secret of their dislike for the turn affairs had taken. John Clay was honest enough to admit it. "To eradicate this feeling was no easy job," he confessed in later years, "but it gradually came about."

When that hard-headed Scot, who had long since made America his home, took over the management of the Swan Land and Cattle Company in March, 1888, he found the company broke and in debt; but he also found a top-notch organization running in high gear, its late leader's financial trapeze work having in no wise affected his ability to pick men and weld them into a team. "In this direction Swan was a master," Clay said, "and he gathered around him an able corps of lieutenants . . . [also] a lot of capable men in minor positions. . . . As an organization it was capable of running over 100,000 head of cattle and all the side issues connected with such an outfit."

And what of Swan himself? A hush as well as a sadness surrounds the end of his career. I could learn of no Swan papers in any library. No letters survive. No member of his family nor any associate ever penned a reminiscence or a tribute to him, nor came to the defense of his memory, with one outstanding exception: a five-page memorandum written in 1946 or 1947 by Arthur LaFrentz, who had served as cashier and American secretary of the Swan Land and Cattle Company until after

Swan left. Brief and restrained, it yet conveys the mood of sorrow and vain regret that many must have felt over such a senseless tragedy.

"If only I had had a little more practical business experience at the time," Mr. LaFrentz wrote, "things might have turned out differently for him and many another, including myself. But I never attempted to question any of his moves—contenting myself by doing that for which I had been engaged."

"If only I"—those three words are all that remain to hint at the soul-searchings that must have gone on in Swan's family of associates in the wake of the unbelievable. If only someone had called his attention more strongly to the messages from the bank in Davenport; if only someone had had the courage to say: "Mr. Swan, don't you think you should attend to this before you leave?" the disaster could have been prevented.

Shortly after he was forced out of the cattle company, Alec Swan left Cheyenne and moved his family to Ogden, Utah, where he tried to regain his feet by engaging in real estate speculation. At the time it was thought that Ogden might become a large railroad center, and Swan acquired some three hundred acres of land on the outskirts, which he had recorded as the Nob Hill addition. The faithful Arthur LaFrentz had turned down an offer to stay on as secretary and cashier of the reorganized cattle company, but when Swan asked him to come to Ogden he accepted, leaving Cheyenne and rejoining his old chief in the winter of 1889. The real estate boom collapsed in a few years—the familiar story—and Alec Swan suffered another failure. The rest is silence. Except that he died on August 9, 1905, and was buried in the Mountain View Cemetery at Ogden. □

The best known source on Alec Swan is John Clay's *My Life On the Range* (Chicago, 1924; and Norman, Oklahoma, 1962). But, while detailed in some respects, it omits at least as much as it includes. Agnes Wright Spring in *Seventy Years: A Panoramic History of the Wyoming Stock Growers' Association* (Cheyenne, 1942) gives an excellent account of Swan in his heyday. Early biographical facts come from Charles G. Coutant's unpublished articles in the Wyoming State Archives. The source of the few direct quotations from Swan himself is the Swan dictation in *Wyoming Questionnaires* (Bancroft Library, Berkeley). The Two Bar outfit is described in Robert Homer Burns, Andrew Springs Gillespie and Willing Gay Richardson's *Wyoming's Pioneer Ranches* (Laramie, 1955).

The barest facts and dates connected with Swan's failure are from the newspapers, largely of Cheyenne and Omaha, for the summer of 1887. But the most poignant part of the story, which tells of the oversight that led to his downfall, has lain buried for eighty years in such obscure journals as the Kansas City *Livestock Indicator* and the Omaha *Stockman*, and is now for the first time, I believe, brought to light. For this find I am indebted to Mr Lamar Moore, formerly of Winslow, Arizona, and now living in California, and his remarkable collection of western items. There are also some sidelights in Mercer's *Northwestern Livestock Journal* of Cheyenne.

Finally, I am indebted to Mr. Arthur F. LaFrentz for some hitherto unpublished facts about his father's connection with Swan, and about Swan's later days

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This Wondrous Town *continued from page 14*

Schools meanwhile were conducted in seven rented rooms scattered throughout the town. One cubicle, sixteen by twenty feet, is said to have cared for eighty pupils under a single teacher. Teachers' salaries ranged from $65 to $75 a month and often were not paid on time. A central school building was not completed until 1881; predictably, it proved far too small.

Civic bond issues seldom attracted more than a hundred voters from the thousands qualified. On the other hand, citizens groups took over many functions the town was unable to perform. Church and benevolent organizations energetically raised money for hospitals. Edwin Harrison and H. A. W. Tabor, among others, provided equipment for volunteer fire companies that bore their names; the rivalry between the groups was so intense that the city finally had to appoint a superintendent to keep the volunteers fighting fire (instead of each other) at a blaze. Merchant associations hired sprinkling carts for the streets. In September, 1879, the merchants also formed their own Protective Patrol, its members deputized by the county sheriff. During its first month the patrol put out several fires, checked three attempts at burglary and "two of hold up your hands," escorted twenty-one drunks home, recovered six stray horses, and assisted the city police in making fourteen arrests.

Leadville took pride in being tough. Saloons, whorehouses, gambling dens, footpads, lynchings, and general boisterousness were believed to be proof that a camp had "arrived." When a reporter from the *Democrat* mourned on January 4, 1880, that "now one can stand on a street corner twenty minutes without hearing the whiz of a single bullet. Alas! Alas!" he was not being wholly facetious. Yet the same paper at the same period was eagerly reporting the cultural activities of the substantial men who ran the expanding industrial complex: their

THE BEST-PAYING BUSINESS AND BUSIEST PEOPLE IN THE MINING REGIONS—SURVEYORS STARTING ON AN EXPEDITION TO FIX THE BOUNDARIES OF CLAIMS (*Leslie's*, May 24, 1879).

glee clubs and dance groups and open houses; their doings at hotel and restaurant openings; the activities of orchestras, chess clubs, and literary societies; the dramatic productions imported from the outside to the plush new Tabor Grand Opera House. Simultaneously, Samuel F. Emmons and his crew of topographers, chemists, and metallurgists from the United States Geological Survey were readying one of the federal government's truly epochal publications, the *Geology and Mining Industry of Leadville*.

The end of the frenzy came abruptly during the first half of 1880. In March, the Little Pittsburgh mine, capitalized in New York for $20,000,000 and pushing wildly to maintain a dividend rate of $100,000 a month, ran out of ore. The reverberations of the crash shook down the irrational speculation that was inflating all property values beyond reason.

Next, on May 26, the workers in the Chrysolite mine went on strike for higher wages and drew most of the other mine laborers out with them. Brass band parades through the streets stirred intense excitement and led the governor of the state to yield to pressure for martial law. Strict edicts against vagrancy were used to sweep away "undesirables." One hundred and sixty-five men were arrested and offered a choice between a fifty-dollar fine, a fifty-day jail sentence, or departure from town within twenty-four hours. "Tramp, tramp, tramp the boys went marching," reported the *Democrat* with undisguised relish. The strike collapsed. But loss of revenue during the walkout forced marginal businesses into failure. Management, thoroughly sobered by what had happened to the Little Pittsburgh, took firm hold on the town's economy.

On July 23, 1880, the first train arrived. As expected, many freighters were forced out of business, and radical alterations in prices caused anguish among many suppliers. The careless attitudes of the boom days gave way to thoughtful calculations about the future. The installation of huge pumps for dewatering deep workings was but one technological instance of long term thinking.

As expenses mounted and profit margins grew thinner because of the exhaustion of the original bonanza ores, typical corporate mergers appeared. The fifteen or so smelters combined and recombined until only four were operating. Some operators left the district entirely, believing that it was cheaper to move ore downhill to the coal than coal uphill to the mines. After the Grant smelter, largest in the district, had been destroyed by fire late in the '80's, its owners rebuilt in Denver. Meyer Guggenheim, a Philadelphia lace merchant who had acquired mines in Leadville through an intricate chain of mortgage foreclosures, decided to build a reduction work for his ores in Pueblo. This was the beginning of the enormous Guggenheim smelting empire with ramifications throughout the world.

Consolidation of smelters and mines did not signify that Leadville was losing her preeminence as a producing camp. For two decades, until the Cripple Creek gold fields roared into production, Lake County, of which Leadville was the seat, ranked at the top of the state's mining areas. Supervising this complex demanded trained personnel, most of whom brought their families with them. Naturally, they wanted to see their new homes secured not only by the familiar economic patterns which Uncle Billy Stevens, Alvinus Wood, and Edwin Harrison had tried to implant as early as 1877, but by traditional social and cultural patterns as well. As soon as isolation ended, after corporate mining had replaced individual prospecting, and after laborers and speculators had been brought quietly to heel, the tumult faded and the voices of standardization were heard. Swiftly, Leadville changed from a frontier mining camp to a clearly recognizable eastern-style American city.

Ernest Ingersoll, who had been awed by the town's flamboyance in 1879, recognized the change instantly on his return less than ten years later, when he was preparing (under the editorship of John Muir, no less) several oversized, handsomely illustrated, early-day coffee table booklets on the western states, entitled "Picturesque California," "Picturesque Colorado," and so on. Leadville, Ingersoll reported sadly, no longer qualified. It was not picturesque. "The people are of the commonplace and newest type . . . eastern men who brought so much civilization with them and so quickly identified with the outer world that romance had no time to grow."

He went on for another paragraph or two analyzing what had happened—instant urbanization, as it were. It is not necessary to quote. The Englishman Philip Stewart Robinson, cited earlier, had already hit on a defter capsulization. Leadville, Robinson observed in 1882, was another striking example of "the natural phenomenon of race reverting to an old type." □

The office of the *Herald-Democrat* in Leadville, Colorado, holds the only complete file of the early Leadville newspapers (the *Carbonate Chronicle*, a weekly, and the *Evening Chronicle*, a daily, the *Leadville Weekly Democrat* and the daily *Leadville Democrat*; and the daily and weekly *Leadville Herald*). Fortunately, two of the early editors left their impressions of the boom days: R. G. Dill of the *Daily Herald*, who wrote on "The History of Lake County" in O. Baskin (comp.), *History of the Arkansas Valley* (Chicago, 1881); and Carlyle C. Davis, who launched the *Evening Chronicle* and the *Carbonate Chronicle* and expanded to dominate the scene through the *Herald-Democrat*; Davis's reminiscences, *Olden Times in Colorado*, were published in Los Angeles in 1916.

Other contemporaries who wrote of Leadville from first-hand knowledge were G. T. Ingham, *Digging Gold Among the Rockies* (Philadelphia, 1880); Frank Fossett, *Colorado, Its Gold and Silver Mines*, pp. 404-462 (New York, 1880); Ernest Ingersoll, *The Crest of the Continent* (Chicago, 1885); Frank Hall, *History of the State of Colorado*, Vol. II, pp. 425-493, and the chapter in Vol. III on Lake County.

Contemporary journalistic descriptions include *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, eight issues between April 12 and July 5, 1879, Ernest Ingersoll's series in *Scribner's Monthly*, May through October, 1879; Helen Hunt Jackson's "To Leadville," in the *Atlantic Monthly* for May, 1879; and N. S. Shaler's "To Leadville" in the January, 1881 issue.

Two later studies which draw primarily on the early newspapers are Don L. and Jean Harvey Griswold's *The Carbonate Camp Called Leadville* (Denver, 1951) and Eugene F. Irey's doctoral dissertation, *A Social History of Leadville, Colorado, During the Boom Days, 1877-1881* (University of Minnesota, 1951). Also useful was Norma Flynn's "History of the Famous Mosquito Pass" in the *Denver Westerners' Brand Book*, XIV, 1958.

Hoof and Horn *continued from page 20*

to find "my wife certainly 'stayed by the stuff' in my absence. Spent the day unloading my wagon and knocking around town generally." By the next Friday, he and others were already "conscripting calves" for a better drive the next April.

No need to follow Hamp Baker on subsequent drives. As happened to so many other men, the trail had gotten into his blood, and he would feel the urge to go north every time men started gathering. Between times, he would do all those things which men do—work, hunt, trade, kill hogs, and have children.

So men went north, year-in and year-out, having their own variety of experiences, getting invariably weary en route and invariably resuscitated at the end of the trail.

If they made money, they went home enthusiastic about next year's possibilities. If they lost heavily, they went home determined to get a new start next year. Thus millions of cattle traveled to market for close to a quarter of a century, and some right down to the century's end. Though the barriers of settlement, barbed wire, advancing railroads, windmills, and the like finally closed the trails, the memories remain as fresh as the new grass of succeeding springs.

The Chisholm Trail was the first great cattle trail that turned men's thoughts and dreams to the West. Ghost riders, ghost mustangs, and ghost cattle still trail up it, a continual herd that promises to string to eternity. It's already starting its second century. □

Recently a graduate student of mine totted up all the sources—manuscript collections, newspapers, public documents, public records, theses, pamphlets, periodicals, and books—on the Chisholm Trail. They totaled approximately 400 separate places to which a person wanting information on the trail could turn. The definitive book, of course, is Wayne Gard's *The Chisholm Trail*, which appeared in 1954, but even since Gard "focused the lens of scholarship on the subject as no previous student has" *(Saturday Review*, September 25, 1954), another 100 items have appeared. Apparently the bibliographical trail that Jesse Chisholm turned loose in 1867 runs much deeper and more enduring than the grassy trail from Texas to Abilene. Principal manuscript collections are in the University of Texas Library, Kansas State Historical Society, and Texas State Library. The main public records can be found in Ellsworth, Abilene, and Topeka, Kansas. Documents range from *Journals of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Texas* to national census reports, particularly those dealing with agriculture, *Public Laws of Illinois*, Joseph Nimmo's historic assay in *Report on the Internal Commerce of the United States* (1886), and newspapers all the way from Matagorda, Texas, to cattle periodicals like the New York *Times* and the New York *Tribune*. Again, the state historical journals of Oklahoma, Kansas, Texas, and Nebraska are information corrals. In addition, magazines like *Texas and Southwestern Horsemen*, *Western Horsemen*, *Southwest Review*, *The Cattleman*, *West Texas Historical Association Yearbook*, journals of the state historical societies of Iowa, Missouri, and Illinois, *Harper's*, *Scribner's*, and even the *American Historical Review* (October 1916) contribute. The trail is unending.

Gold Rush Daguerreotypes *continued from page 39*

both his relationship to the Gold Rush and the larger social history of this complex event.

Contemporary coffee houses, newspaper offices, Wells Fargo express offices, wharves, ships, all these can be seen on surviving Gold Rush daguerreotypes. In certain panoramas one can see the knock-down frame houses built on the East Coast and sent by sea to be reassembled in San Francisco. Corrugated metal (supposedly fireproof) warehouses pre-fabricated in Liverpool stand in crowded downtown streets, surrounded by ships roofed over as warehouses and hotels. The storeships *Apollo* and *Niantic* stand revealed in other panoramas. Wonder of wonders! in one daguerreotype panorama there can be seen the *only known photograph* of Captain William Richardson's famous San Francisco home, the Casa Grande.

For the enthusiast who cares for very close scrutiny with a magnifying glass, there are even other wonders to discover. The very early sidewheel steamboat *C. H. Weber* lies moored at Rincon Point. The steamboat *Kangaroo*, San Francisco's first ferryboat, is tied up near the sandy shore at First Street. Young ships' officers, ashore for a day of liberty, pose with the sea-officer's long glass. One panorama contains a hurrying gentleman wearing the most incredible wide-brimmed Panama hat this writer has ever seen or read about. The very flea-infested, crumbling sand dunes of Yerba Buena cove are presented with freshly washed laundry spread to dry on the nearby chaparral bushes. The Vulcan Foundry, The Sutter House, The People's Bakery, various ship chandleries, hotels, pile drivers, churches, schoolhouses, abandoned ships fenced in to create new-filled land, the telegraph on Telegraph Hill, Russian Hill, Alcatraz *sans* prison . . . all of this is discernible in the surviving San Francisco panoramas.

For the nautical-minded there are pictures of early, single-topsail clippers, old Liverpool packets, whalers, and tiny little Danish and Norwegian cutters that should not have been able at all to double Cape Horn. All of these vessels rest upright or askew in the tidal ooze of the cove at Yerba Buena.

The living feel of the confusion, the excitement, the wild abandon, and the random character of the burgeoning Gold City is preserved on these earliest San Francisco daguerreotypes.

The enterprising daguerreotypists did not stop at the city limits of San Francisco. *"On to the Mines"* was the cry. Placer mining of the period was very well suited to the camera. Most of the mining was above the ground, in plain sight, and in most cases could be easily photographed. Robert Vance's catalogue suggests that the surviving daguerreotypes of the mines and the mining camps are but a fraction of the many plates that were made. The few remaining are revealing enough, showing us many completely typical characteristics of the rough miner's life.

Principally, one can see clearly the many difficulties and the immense labor involved in recovering gold. Young, bearded miners, standing bare-legged and knee-deep in icy-cold Sierra streams and rivers, are to be seen in many views. The huge boulders and immense quantities of gravel that had to be shifted from one place to another are equally visible.

The makeshift character of the newborn and often quickly disappearing foothill mining camps, as seen in the two surviving views of Fiddletown and Murphy's, are less frequently seen. Perhaps of the greatest interest in the daguerreotype portraits is the clear revelation of how young were the majority of the miners. They are living proof of the fact that the mining life was a "young man's game." Bearded and husky as we see them now, they were, in fact, largely callow young men and they make more understandable the ability of the Gold Rush miner to withstand the bitter rigors of a miner's life.

The many difficulties of life in the mining camps did not dismay the daguerreotypist. Sometimes he set up a permanent supply base, sometimes a gallery in such a center as Sacramento, Marysville, or Stockton. Often a one-day trip to a nearby camp on a burro sufficed. An extended trip for a number of days or a few weeks allowed him the opportunity to pitch a temporary gallery in the largest of the camps in a particular locality. There is at least one daguerreotype showing a horse-drawn gallery in the mining country, the establishment of a Mr. Isaac Baker.

Some of the Gold Rush daguerreotypists were from other countries and many of them must have returned to their homes with views of San Francisco and the gold regions. "Lost" Gold Rush daguerreotypes will be found in the various archives of European countries. Hopefully the day will be soon, so that the growing visual record of this enormous human upheaval will be more fully seen and understood.

Not the least of the results of Gold Rush daguerreotypy was that it proved the indispensable training ground for a succeeding generation of distinguished western photographers. The celebrated Carleton E. Watkins first secured photographic employment with Robert Vance as a temporary employee in Vance's San Jose gallery. The remarkable series of daguerreotype views of Captain C. H. Weber's home and the surrounding areas of Gold Rush Stockton have been attributed to William Rulofson. Rulofson, together with a San Francisco daguerreotypist named Bradley, later formed the internationally famous photographic firm of Bradley and Rulofson. The capable Isaiah W. Taber, one-time New Bedford whaleman, worked in San Francisco as a daguerrean operator for one of the town's leading galleries before opening his own photographic business.

San Francisco was for many years the center of Pacific Coast photographic activity. It was the main source of supplies, trained personnel, and accumulated business experience. The early daguerreotypists laid firm foundations for this development. Photographing the Gold Rush they not only created imperishable images of history in the making, they nurtured the seeds of the art and the trained personnel of the golden period of Pacific Coast photography that followed immediately thereafter.

Their work is the first use made of the infant photographic process to "cover" a major news event. Much of that coverage has been lost or destroyed. The remaining daguerreotypes are an enduring and vivid monument to the powerful instrument the camera has become, since 1839, in preserving the visual record of human history.□

Significant holdings of Gold Rush daguerreotypes can be found in the Bancroft Library of the University of California at Berkeley, including the Zelda Mackay collection, undoubtedly the single largest body of such material. Additional important items are held by the George Eastman House, the California Historical Society, The Society of California Pioneers, The American Antiquarian Society, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and individual collectors.

Important research work in this field has been carried on by the George Eastman House and the San Francisco Maritime Museum. Much important information has been uncovered by Beaumont Newhall, Karl Kortum, Al Harmon, Harlan Soeten, Carl Bertil Lund, Roger R. Olmsted, J. S. Holliday, and Robert A. Weinstein. The assistance and generosity of numerous private collectors has been of inestimable value in furthering these investigations.

Books That Won the West *continued from page 32*

sas City or Independence to the Great Bend of the Arkansas, then northward to the upper South Platte River; or directly west along the Republican or Smoky Hill rivers from Leavenworth or Atchison to the South Platte. The northern and southern routes along the Platte River and Santa Fe Trail were clearly marked and well traveled, but the central route that followed the Smoky Hill or Republican rivers was virtually unexplored and traversed an arid plain where water, grass, and food were almost unattainable. Any responsible guidebook should have recommended the two known

routes to inexperienced travelers, not the dangerous, but shorter, central route.

Books that did so, however, labored under a disadvantage, for no amount of figure-juggling could hide the fact that the easier trails were longer than those following the Smoky Hill or Republican rivers. Those favoring the Santa Fe route from Kansas City or Independence grudgingly admitted that these cities lay 684 miles from the mines (when actually the figure was nearer 800 miles), but pointed out that the warm climate allowed an earlier start in the spring. Advocates of the northern route along the Platte River shrank the length of their trail to 489 miles from the 668 charged by their rivals, and argued that the ease and speed of travel more than offset the greater distance. One insisted that the road rivaled in excellence the macadamized turnpikes of the East, running straight as an arrow, "hard and smooth, without a stone or a pebble to jolt the carriage," and with hardly a hill to slow the teams. There, the guidebooks claimed, all streams were bridged or easily forded, wood and grass were abundant, and the Indian danger nonexistent. "Those who have traveled it," testified one, "say it is the best natural road they ever saw."

Despite persuasive distortions, the central route from Leavenworth or Atchison remained indisputably shorter, and the principal object of every miner was to reach the diggings before his rivals. This was stressed again and again by guidebooks that urged their readers to outfit at these two towns. No mention was made of the fact that the western portions of this trail were largely unknown, that game and water were almost impossible to find there, and that grass was too scant to sustain any large number of draft animals. Instead, the fifty-niners were assured that the arid stretch between the head of the Republican River and the diggings was only fifty miles wide, and that they would find "ample supplies of timber, water, and grass, almost the entire distance." Many an inexperienced greenhorn risked death by accepting such falsehoods as truth; the tales of starvation and even cannibalism on the Smoky Hill trail form one of the most terrifying of all sagas of the frontier.

Writers who promised a cheap and easy stroll to the Pikes Peak mines were just warming up to their tales of the wealth that could be found there. Their purpose was to prove that gold was broadcast in such infinite quantities that all of America's dispossessed could make their fortunes. To this end, they placed less stress on spectacular finds than the California guidebooks, and more on the general distribution of gold-bearing soils. "The gold region," one declared, "is unlike that of California. In the latter, a few men would make their piles by striking a good lead; but in the Kansas gold mines every man can find gold and make good wages." If authors and publishers were to have their way, the rush of the fifty-niners would be the most democratic in history.

That this was their purpose is testified by their insistence upon the uniform distribution of gold throughout the Rocky Mountain country. "It is," testified one author, "difficult to find a shovelful of dirt that does not contain more or less of the precious metal." Nor was this wealth confined to a narrow region near Pikes Peak. Miners had tested the whole country from New Mexico to the South Platte, an area four hundred miles long and one hundred wide, and had "found drift gold in greater or less quantities everywhere." The conclusion was obvious, and was stated clearly by one guidebook: "There is no end to the precious metal. Nature seems to have turned into a most successful alchemist by converting the very sands of the streams into gold." This was possible, the authors explained, because locked in the depths of the Rocky Mountains was a solid core of gold, weighing perhaps millions of tons, from which fragments had been washed to the surface. This, at least, was the theory of a reputable geologist, Colonel William Gilpin, whose speculations were reproduced as sober fact by many a guidebook. "*Gold,*" predicted one, "will be found there in a solid mass, just as iron is found at Pilot Knob or Shepherd Mountain." To those who read and believed, few mining areas in all history offered such tempting prospects: an assured income of twenty to forty dollars a day, with a chance of uncovering the most spectacular gold deposit known to man. One can understand why a German seen gathering empty meal sacks at Council Bluffs told a questioner that he was going to fill them with Pikes Peak gold "if I have to stay there till fall."

A hundred thousand men started west that spring, in wagons, in carriages, in hand carts, in wind wagons, on foot. The first arrivals straggled into the Pikes Peak country in late April to find all mining sites along the ice-clogged streams appropriated and the passes into the mountains blocked by snows that would not melt for weeks. Most took one look at the astronomical prices being charged for bacon, beans, and gritty Mexican bread, and turned tail. Their dire reports convinced

others on the trail to turn back, until a mass retreat was under way. "Such a stampede of human beings was never seen before," wrote the correspondent of a New York newspaper. "Mule teams, horses, cow and ox teams, hand-carts, men with carpet sacks, riders and runners, with every imaginable conveyance loaded with every species of articles, from steam saw mills to blankets, all coming back in a hurry, as if flying from some danger." On many a wagon the cheerful slogan, "Pikes Peak or Bust," had been scratched out and "Busted, by God," written underneath.

All realized that they had been "humbugged," and many mixed anger with their disappointment. Not unnaturally, their ire was directed against the merchants in outfitting towns who had urged them on and the guidebook authors who had misdirected them. Some talked of burning St. Joseph, Leavenworth, Council Bluffs, and other supply centers, or of lynching the storekeepers who had spread false tales of Colorado's riches. Others singled out two guidebook writers for special censure in a couplet that was passed from wagon train to wagon train:

Hang Byers and D. C. Oakes
For starting this damned Pikes Peak hoax.

One of those unfortunate authors, Oakes, made the mistake of returning to the mines just as people began to turn back in droves. No sooner was he identified than mob action threatened: on one occasion he escaped lynching only by hiding in a wagon; on another he saw beside the road a grim reminder of the hatred he had inspired—a wooden tombstone bearing the legend in charcoal and axle grease: *Here lies D. C. Oakes, Dead, Buried, and in Hell.* Oakes survived to witness the first substantial gold discoveries in Colorado that summer and to become one of the territory's leading citizens. But the bitterness engendered by his falsehoods and those of his fellow authors persisted for many years.

That guidebook writers and publishers deserved indictment by their contemporaries for their misstatements seems certain, but what of their larger place on the balance sheet of American history? Did they hurry or hinder the peopling of the continent? Two conclusions seem pertinent.

One is that their distortions sparked a larger migration than events justified. In the case of California, they whipped up a frenzy that even the rich placers of that veritable "Golden State" could not assuage. Gold was there, and all but the most outlandish tales of guidebook authors—of five-pound nuggets, or river beds gleaming with yellow metal, of gold picked from the walls of ravines with butcher knives—were sooner or later matched by actual finds. The guides, however, had deliberately lied about the ease of the trek and the certainty of gain. The fabrications of the Pikes Peak guidebooks had less basis in fact. Placers that had yielded less than $1,000 were magnified into gold fields filling the entire Rocky Mountain country. These were bald falsehoods; some of their inventors had visited the diggings in 1858 and knew the gulf that existed between fact and their fancies. There seems little doubt that the guidebook authors can be indicted for warping the truth to appeal to the psychology of the times.

The second conclusion is more flattering to the guidebook writers. They were, it appears, competent students of human motivation. The contrast between the California and Pikes Peak guidebooks underlines this point. The forty-niner guides recognized that the journey to the mines was long and expensive, and that only the lure of exceptional strikes would justify the risk; hence they dusted their pages with stories of nuggets as large as diamonds, of a single hole that had yielded $17,000, of miners who washed out 273 pounds of gold in a few weeks. The trumpeters of the '59 rush, knowing that they were appealing to a depression-impoverished populace and that the trip to the Pikes Peak country was neither too long nor too costly for the average man, stressed the ease with which a whole army of miners could make a respectable living from the gold-impregnated soil. That a hundred thousand persons responded to their call testifies to the success of their appeal.

Whatever the skill of the guidebook authors, and no matter how base their motives, they did play a not insignificant role in peopling the West. Many attracted to the mines by their extravagant statements were disillusioned and returned home, but enough stayed on to build a new civilization, based first on mining, then on the diversified farming, trade, and industry that symbolized the maturing civilization of each region. Authors might with some justice be threatened with lynching and buried in effigy, but their books did help win the West.□

This article is based on a study of twenty-five guidebooks published in 1848 and 1849 for the use of emigrants to the California gold fields, and of seventeen that appeared during the winter of

1858-59 to direct the fifty-niners to the Pikes Peak country of what was then western Kansas. No bibliography or analysis of the California guidebooks has been published. They vary from relatively accurate volumes such as Joseph E. Ware's *The Emigrant's Guide to California* (St. Louis, 1849) and William Clayton's *The Latter-Day Saints Emigrants' Guide* (St. Louis, 1848) to hodgepodges of misinformation compiled by writers utterly ignorant of the trails or mining techniques. Typical of the latter are books by Henry I. Simpson, *The Emigrant's Guide to the Gold Mines* (New York, 1848), and Sidney Roberts, *To Emigrants to the Gold Regions: A Treatise Showing the Best Way to California* (New Haven, 1849). Guidebooks used by the fifty-niners have been expertly catalogued and analyzed in LeRoy R. Hafen (ed.), *Pikes Peak Gold Rush Guidebooks of 1859 (Southwest Historical Series*, Vol IX, Glendale, California, 1941), which reproduces two of the best known books in their entirety. To discover the reaction of the forty-niners and fifty-niners to the inaccurate advice given in the guidebooks, use has also been made of many of the 150 or more published and unpublished diaries and reminiscences written by those who followed the overland trails to the Mother Lode and Pikes Peak regions.

A Magic Journey *continued from page 51*

the seat by the fathers, in which case we would see them, drab, voluminously skirted, and either sunbonneted or in need of combing, or so it seemed. In the wagons meeting us we would catch suggestions of movement back in the obscure depths behind the driver and his seat partner. People were on the move over those rutted, washed, and wind-blown roads, going to the brick-red soil and the scrubby black-jack oaks, the wind, the heat, and the dust storms of Oklahoma, or going away. Some of the railroads were still to be built in the Territory, and much freight was being hauled by wagon between points not connected by the existing railroads.

There was, in fact, so much coming and going that in many towns wagon yards were established to accommodate the travelers. The typical wagon yard consisted of a board-walled enclosure with horse stalls under a shed around one or two sides of the yard. A cookhouse in one corner contained a rusty stove, on which travelers could take their turns. I remember watching with fascination while a grimy woman in the wagon yard at Ponca City tended some sort of dough cooking in a skillet. Her nose was running—or constantly about to run. At the last instant she would sniff and avert catastrophe; then as she bent over the skillet, the threat would renew itself, and she would sniff again. I could see the horror on my mother's face, but I kept watching to see whether the sniff would, once, be delayed too long. I suppose the woman may have given up at last and used her sleeve or the hem of her skirt, but I did not see that surrender. I watched her for a long time—sniff, run, sniff, run—without seeing her reach any conclusion. There was, for my young mind, suspense and drama in the recurrent threat and fending off of imminent misfortune. Why else should I remember Ponca City?

If instead of cookstoves in a grimy and littered shed the wagon yards had only little pits for campfires, they were still cheap and available shelters. And, with the glinting of the fires, the jangling of trace-chains, the voices of strangers in the dusk, the coursing of dogs and boys among the wagons, the mild air redolent of woodsmoke, prairie hay, sweat, and strong tobacco, they had their charms. They are, of course, long gone, the need for them past and largely forgotten. But I saw one such yard still in existence at Lawton, Oklahoma, in 1918.

This was a sort of travel to leave in the mind memories of things seen and heard, memories that remain distinct after many years and not always for easily discovered reasons. There was a wagon just ahead of us in a line where we forded a river—the Arkansas, I think. At the back of the wagon a bucket swung from the endgate, but, to my disappointment, not quite low enough to dip into the water and fill itself. I watched the wheels turning and coming up glistening, a little of the river-water clinging to tire and felloe long enough to be lifted above the surface and run back in little splashings. There were rocks in the ford; a wheel would abruptly rise and tilt a corner of the wagon, then suddenly let it down. My father would pull our team a little to the right or left to miss that particular rock, and perhaps hit another. At last, the wheels would lift dramatically out of the water and roll up the sloping bank, dripping and adding to the wetness of the already slippery incline up which the horses labored. Sitting there on the overjut, I saw the horses' heads go down as they leaned into their collars, and saw the deepening wrinkles in the skin over their haunches as they pulled.

Sometimes we met Indians on the road, or saw them on the streets of Oklahoma towns. Perhaps because I had seen them now and then near home, those dark, solemn men with long braids made less impression on my memory than something that might seem more commonplace—a long straight street in some town entered on a Sunday morning, with no traffic at all except our wagon and a strange little vehicle with a tall, white, box-like body riding high between its four spindly wheels. My father said that it was used to deliver milk, an enterprise

of which I knew nothing. One night in some town—Arkansas City, I think—a clanging, bulky vehicle with lights fore-and-aft was drawn by two horses past a place where we had stopped. This must have been the only horsecar I had ever seen, and it was an astonishment to my eyes. In Winfield, Kansas, we trundled down a street between long rows of cedars, and had to wait for a freight train to pass—a most impressive train, for it ran on a curved embankment at some height above the level of the street. We passed through many towns, and here and there some such sight stuck in my memory like an etching.

Somewhere we came to a river with a bridge across it and boats tied at the water's edge below. While we waited, a girl took a jug and walked out on a boat as far from the bank as she could go—probably far enough from the bank for the water to be clean—stooped, and filled the jug with river water. On some country road in Kansas, shaded by a tall hedge, my sister and I walked behind our wagon and rolled green hedge-apples in the dust. Oklahoma, being new country, had no such hedge fences as in Kansas, and the rough green balls of the *bois d'arc* trees were marvelous objects.

One might suppose that the keenest memories of such a journey would have to do with settings out and arrivals—those moments when long preparation comes at last to fruition and the horses tighten their traces as they take the first step; or when at last they turn into the lane, and the house toward which for days they have been traveling comes into sight. Perhaps for my parents these were the moments that stayed longest in the memory. I do not know. For me they dimmed long ago. But I think I could still recognize the big elm under which we camped one night by the roadside north of Stillwater, Oklahoma. The campfire at dusk was the brightest spot in my world at that moment. There is no other fragrance like that blended from the bale of prairie hay my father broke open for the horses and the sugar cookies my mother took from our food box, a smell later modified and enriched by emanations from the wood smoke of the campfire, boiling coffee, and frying side meat, then tinged with a faintly acrid suspicion of dust when another wagon passed, and with something that came from dew or just from the night itself. There may have been traces of dust and smoke and ashes in the food we ate and in my parents' coffee; and it is possible, as in all campfire cooking, that unclassified items from the air or falling from the tree added their fillip to the flavors. I was not thinking of flavors, I suppose, for I remember nothing of them, for that night. But I remember the smells.

And I remember sounds—the horses still munching their hay after we had gone to bed, the chuckle of wagon wheels on their skeins as some traveler passed, the clinking of trace chains, dogs barking far away, and somewhere in the darkness a hen squalling, repeating a raucous cry over and over, sounding alarmed, or frustrated, or captured—I could not interpret her, but she was voicing some kind and degree of distress. My parents speculated on the reason—perhaps a weasel in some farmer's henhouse.

It is too late to settle the matter now, but I don't think the intruder, if there was one, was a weasel. A weasel is quick and deadly. There was not in this hen's voice the pure terror of imminent death that a captured rabbit can put into a scream (as far as my experience goes the most heart-rending cry in nature). The hen sounded annoyed and somewhat frightened. Perhaps she was less hysterical than a rabbit. Perhaps she just didn't have the voice.

It was a wonderful journey. Not many years afterward, to travel in a covered wagon, in that part of the world, would have had a tinge of the disreputable, would have been a shiftless, gypsy sort of thing to do. But many such conveyances were moving in Oklahoma then, and though many of the people in them were doubtless an unthrifty lot—certainly I saw plenty of frowzy women and uncombed children, to say nothing of the drab, dusty, rumpled woman with the nose in Ponca City—many of them were highly respectable, if I had been concerned with such matters. Many of the people we knew and liked had come to Oklahoma in covered wagons.

But I should have been troubled, in any case, by no such concern. I was seeing and hearing sights and sounds, and enjoying moments I could never have known at all except for the very slowness of our travel. Nobody now would stop and make a campfire to fry side meat in a big black skillet and boil coffee in a pot blackened by many campfires, when he could add a hundred miles to his day's travel in the time so spent—or when in a few minutes he could go on to Stillwater and find a motel with a restaurant near by. But to us an hour or two more would have meant gaining only a distance of five or six miles, and horses had to have their food and rest. So I heard the hen squalling out her fright, and fancied that large creatures called weasels were blundering around

and disturbing her. The hen and the hypothetical weasel were worth the night's stopping.

And in our slow course through Oklahoma, where men were breaking new ground with undersized oxen, where roads angled across sections of prairie grass never yet fenced or plowed, and Indians and white men mingled in the dusty towns, where streams were forded because bridges had not yet been built, where once or twice one saw men on horseback driving herds of cattle with long horns, very different from my father's milk cows, there was something exhilarating in what I was too young to recognize as the newness of the country.

Much of it looked, of course, weather-beaten enough. Or so people and their equipment looked. If a wagon cover was white and clean, it had not gone very far; most of the canvas was grayed by the sun, dust, and rain. Some of it was not only gray but ragged, with holes where children's faces could be seen peering out. Men wore soiled and shapeless clothes; dust and heat and intermittent labor at camp or river-crossing or hill where a weak team needs a boost do not cultivate fastidious tastes in dress. The women—all women in those days—wore voluminous garments, and when they traveled, their dresses were dark or faded. A woman climbing from a wagon seat would gather her skirts in her hand, step perilously down to the doubletree behind the near horse, and make a little awkward leap, permitting her dusty garments to subside about her ankles as her foot touched the ground, putting up her hand to push back her hair, wearily, while her husband went about unhitching his team. But tired, dusty, or unkempt, they were all going somewhere.

I did not then recognize the newness of the country, but I could feel it, traveling in a covered wagon.

It was a magic journey. □

The Snively Expedition *continued from page 58*

tory at will. Then, in May, while Snively was marching toward the Arkansas, Warfield's band attacked the settlement of Mora in the extreme northeastern portion of New Mexico, killing five Mexicans, capturing eighteen, and stealing seventy-two horses. Soon afterward, a Mexican column overtook the invaders and scattered them in a hot, running fight. The remnants of Warfield's force walked to the vicinity of Bent's Fort and disbanded Warfield himself and two of his men had wandered over the area until they came upon Snively's camp near the Arkansas.

In the meantime, Mexican authorities had complained bitterly to U.S. officials about Warfield's invasion. The New Mexico governor, Don Manuel Armijo, even sent a force of cavalry to guard the lives and property of Mexican merchants who crossed the trail. Snively, of course, had known that Armijo had a sizable force somewhere along the trail. The Mexicans he had captured on June 20 had been part of it. What Snively did not know was why the Mexicans were patrolling the trail in the first place.

The second "land pirate" was one John McDaniel, who had robbed and killed a well-known Albuquerque merchant near the Little Arkansas, inside the boundaries of the United States. News of the act spread like a prairie fire, and U.S. lawmen soon apprehended McDaniel and his men. Hoping for clemency, McDaniel described himself as "lately from Texas" and claimed to have acted on the full authority of Houston's government. U.S. newspapers, predictably, sensationalized the story, damning Texas for sanctioning the work of murderers and thieves, and when U.S. authorities heard of Snively's presence on the Arkansas, they assumed that he was leading yet another band of cutthroats. Cooke's cavalry was forthwith dispatched to protect the Mexican caravan from Fort Leavenworth and to disarm and drive off any hostile Texans found in U.S. territory.

Snively, though, knew nothing about McDaniel's work and perhaps nothing about Warfield's. Even if he had known, one nagging question would have remained: why had Cooke invaded Texas territory to carry out his orders? Was it really for "a monetary consideration," or simply a driving desire to interpret his orders in their broadest possible sense in order to spare his government further embarrassment? Snively himself did not know. Perhaps no one would ever know what had prompted Cooke's actions.

But Snively had more immediate concerns than the motives of Captain Cooke. The day after the capture, Eli Chandler and his "home boys" (Miller's sardonic name for them) staggered into Snively's camp. Instead of going home, they had wandered about the Arkansas hoping to find the Mexican caravan for themselves, but had found nothing, nothing at all, and now they were half dead from hunger and exhaustion. Would Snively have the decency to give them food and let them travel

along with him? After all, the more men the Colonel had, the stronger his force would be should they encounter Indians or Mexican cavalry.

Snively, a decent man, agreed to let them come along. It was a mistake. He and Chandler began quarreling immediately, and the entire column was soon rent by dissension. Twelve men deserted, crossing the Arkansas and joining Cooke's command. Most of the other raiders, goaded on by Chandler's men, blamed the futility of the expedition on the blind incompetence of their commander. Upon that, Snively "resigned the command of the battalion, in disgust at the want of subordination of men & subalterns, indignantly breaking his sword & thrusting it to the ground."

Warfield then stepped forward and offered a proposition: the Mexican caravan Captain Cooke had escorted to the Arkansas River was well inside Texas territory by now, and was unprotected. They could take it easily, then head for home before Cooke found out. Who would follow him? The men whispered among themselves. Sixty-two of them stepped forward. But Chandler and some forty others thought it was useless to chase any more fugitive trains, and set out for home—this time in earnest. Warfield, with Snively tagging stubbornly along, led the others westward, promising them they would soon be rich men.

On July 13 they reached Cimarron Springs, where they found the ashes of two large camp sites—one made by Mexican cavalry, the other by the big caravan. The latter was evidently the most recent, which meant that the cavalry was ahead of the train rather than behind it. The raiders were ecstatic; after two months of unbelievably hard luck, providence appeared to favor them. They lined up in the road and prepared to march. To their immeasurable shock, Warfield suddenly claimed that the Mexican cavalry was in *back* of the caravan, not in front of it—he knew these treacherous Mexicans—and that they were marching into an ambush. Miller protested that all the evidence proved the contrary, but Warfield turned his mule southward. "Men," he yelled, "I am going to the interior of Texas. All wishing to go home will follow me."

When Warfield started forward, it was the final blow. One by one, the raiders fell in behind him. Finally, only ten men remained, among them Colonel Snively. After a brief consultation, they picked up their weapons, cursed their luck, and fell in behind the "double dealing" Warfield.

Two days later the raiders had become more dissatisfied with Warfield than they had ever been with Snively. They suspected that Young was right, that Warfield was a traitor. Consequently, they "notified him of their desire to accept his resignation. It was tendered, and Col. Snively again selected to command." Snively had been exonerated, so to speak.

But there was to be more bad luck ahead. On the return march, Indians killed five raiders, two others got in a fight, one killing the other, and the rest, suffering from exposure and exhaustion, went the last four days with nothing to eat at all. The remnants of the "Battalion of Invincibles" dragged themselves into Bird's Fort, halfway between present-day Dallas and Fort Worth, and there disbanded on August 6, 1843. "The Santa Fe expedition," Young recorded with masterful understatement, "was a failure."

When Snively reported to Houston, the President was furious about the encounter with Cooke. This was *another* national insult. But since Houston was already maneuvering to get Texas annexed to the United States, there was nothing he would do but make a polite protest to President Tyler. Tyler agreed to look into the matter, and several months later he called a court of inquiry to investigate Cooke's actions. The court convened at Fort Leavenworth on April 2, 1844, spent a little over three weeks reviewing the case, and concluded that Cooke had disarmed Snively's raiders not on Texas soil but "within the territory of the United States," and that he had in no way exceeded his authority.

The raiders were scandalized when they learned of the Court's decision, but hardly anyone else in Texas cared much one way or the other by then. Since the failure of the Snively Expedition, the Republic had ceased dreaming of empire. She looked to the United States for solutions to her manifold problems, and worked assiduously for annexation. There was considerable opposition to annexation in New England, not only because Texas held with slavery, but (in the words of a Massachusetts Whig) because of her "population of lawless renegade ruffian adventurers." U.S. expansionists, led by President-elect James K. Polk, overcame such opposition, and Congress annexed Texas by a joint resolution in February of 1845, and thereby set in motion a spiral of accusation and counter-accusation with Mexico that would shortly plummet the two republics into war.

Neither annexation nor the War with Mexico ended the controversy over the Snively Expedition—or the hard

luck of the surviving raiders. Jacob Snively himself, bitten by the gold bug, set out for California after the great strike of 1848. For thirty years he searched the West for gold as fruitlessly as he had looked for Mexican caravans back in 1843, only to die of an Apache arrow in 1871.

Several of the raiders petitioned the United States, protesting the decision of the Fort Leavenworth court and demanding that they be generously compensated for the weapons that Cooke had confiscated. President Polk, always the Texans' friend, thought the raiders had a just claim and called on Congress to do something to settle the matter. After several delays and considerable debate, during which the actual location of the Snively capture received only passing attention, the Senate finally passed an act, approved on March 3, 1847, giving Texas $30,000 as compensation not only for the arms that the Snively Expedition had lost, but also for goods that a band of men from the United States had once stolen from the customhouse at Bryarly's Landing on the Red River. The survivors of the Snively Expedition ultimately received $18.75 each.

Insulted by such a trifling amount, the raiders sent another petition to Washington, demanding at least twice the amount. Texas Senator Thomas J. Rusk introduced a resolution to pay the raiders what they asked for, but the Senate voted it down. When the raiders learned of the vote, they unleashed their frustrations on the other senator from Texas—Sam Houston. They accused Houston of speaking out against the resolution, of telling the entire Senate that he had not authorized the Snively Expedition to march up to the Santa Fe Trail, of dropping the accusation that the column was "an organization of bandits—or words to that effect." This alleged denunciation had supposedly turned the Senate against Rusk's resolution, and Sam Houston had thus "rebuked, and defeated the just claims, of the men who had undergone privations and hardships to serve Texas at his bidding. His action in the premises is one of those anomalies not to be accounted for on any known principle of philosophy, or any rule of logic."

This accusation has never been substantiated by any known evidence. But while the writer was doing research on the expedition in the summer of 1963, he was informed that someone still living—someone, it was alleged, who had a vested interest in preserving Houston's good name—was concealing evidence that would prove Houston *had* lied about his connections with the raid and *had* called Snively's men a band of thieves. The writer is inclined to doubt the allegation, but it does indicate that some stout Texans, after one hundred and twenty-four years, are still concerned with the reputation of Sam Houston as it is reflected in the story of his hard-luck colonel.□

This account of the Snively Expedition drew heavily on "Jacob Snively's reports to M. C. Hamilton, February to August, 1843, Army Papers, 1840-45" (Archives, Texas State Library, Austin); on the diary of Steward A. Miller, as quoted in H. Bailey Carroll, "Steward A. Miller and the Snively Expedition," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, LIV, 261-86; on Hugh F. Young (Stephen B. Oates, ed.), "Hugh F. Young's Account of the Snively Expedition as Told to John S. Ford," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, LXX, 71-92; also the account of T. C. Forbes and Gilbert Ragin in the *Northern Standard* (Clarksville, Texas), September 14, 1843; the account of Moses Wells, R. P. Crump, Hugh F. Young, and others, in the *Northern Standard*, September 21 and 28, 1843; and Philip St. George Cooke's version of the Snively capture in William E. Connelly (ed.), "A Journal of the Santa Fe Trail," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XII, 225-34. I also made use of William C. Binkley's *The Expansionist Movement in Texas, 1836-1850* (Berkeley, 1925); volume II of Henderson Yoakum, *History of Texas from Its First Settlement in 1685 to Its Annexation to the United States in 1846* (2 vols.; New York, 1855); and Marquis James, *The Raven: A Biography of Sam Houston* (New York, 1929), 321, 323, from which the Houston quotes at the beginning of the article were drawn.

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Membership

Membership in the Association is open to anyone interested in the history and culture of the American West. Membership is solicited, and inquiries should be addressed to the secretary, John Porter Bloom, Box 6187, Washington, D. C. 20004. Annual dues $7.50 (including THE AMERICAN WEST and other association publications), Sustaining Member $15 annually, Patron $100 or more annually, Life Member $150 paid in a twelve-month period. Student Membership available.

A sporty gathering in the Black Hills, circa 1900. Thirty years before, these dandyfied nature-lovers might have been filled full of holes and scalped, for these were the sacred hunting grounds of the Sioux Indians, deeded to them in perpetuity by the Great Spirit himself. As recently as 1875, when the Federal Government undertook to obtain the Black Hills for the convenience of starry-eyed goldseekers, one belligerant Sioux had declared that he would kill any Indian who knuckled under; such truculence had its usual effect on the course of the white man's invasion, meaning none, and the holy wilderness of the Sioux shortly succumbed to the Gasoline Age, the era of fringed hammocks and Sunday frolics in bosky dells.

(Photo by courtesy of Rex Tario, from a glass plate negative in a Homestake Mining Company warehouse, Lead, South Dakota. From the files of Mildred Fielder.)